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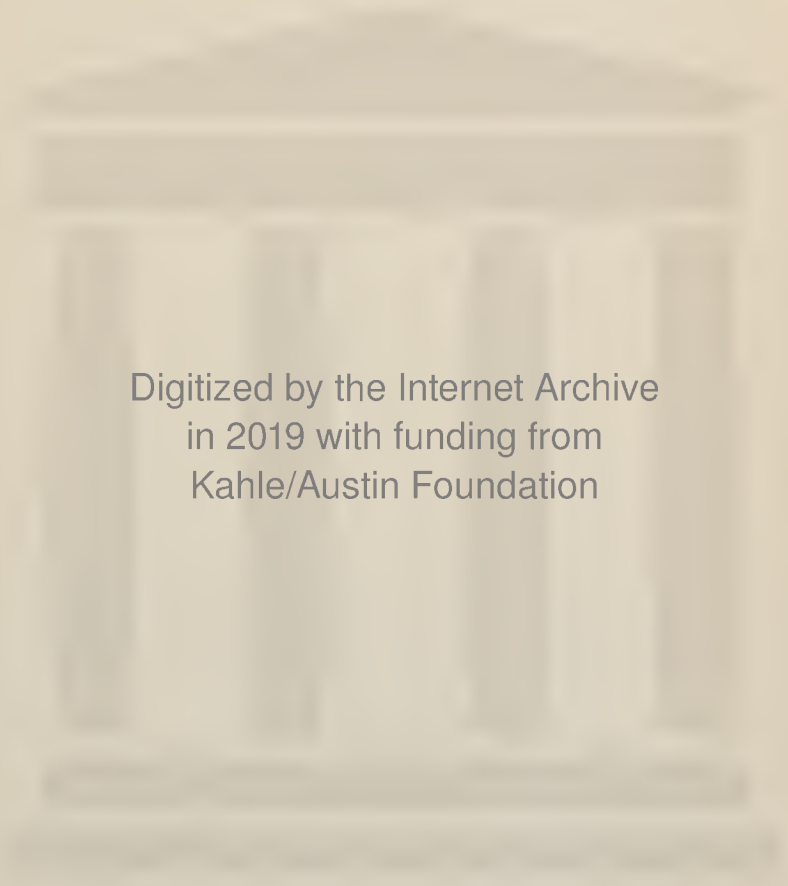

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Ellen Terry as "Sweet Nell of Old Chelsea"
From a drawing by Dame Laura Knight A.R.A.

TURNING THINGS OVER

ESSAYS AND FANTASIES

BY

E. V. LUCAS

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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FRONTISPIECE

Ellen Terry, by Dame Laura Knight, A.R.A.

TURNING THINGS OVER

CONCERNING DATES

I READ the other day of an Australian professor who, on arriving in London from Sydney for the purpose of attending an educational conference, discovered that he was twelve months in advance. The Conference was for the following year. He, therefore, at once re-embarked, and was, I presume, soon at work again as though nothing had happened, although his friends, I trust, did not forget to remind him of it. At any rate, he had the voyage, both out and home, and what could be better than that? And when the right time comes, I suppose he will have it again, and be something of a figure to boot; for though he may not shine at the Conference as an orator, he cannot fail to attract notice as the professor who was a year too soon. 'You have heard', this or that educationalist will say to his friend, 'of the man who

> frequently breakfasts at five o'clock tea
> And dines on the following day?

Well, there he is, over there: that Australian.'

This story is a welcome variation upon the ordinary examples of unpunctuality, which deal always with the people who are late. To be a year early is a real triumph, and I hope that the stone-cutter will remember this when the professor comes to die. In a world defaced, if not ruined, by those who keep us waiting, there should be an imperishable record of this unique anticipator. The phrase 'Sacred to the memory' has an ironical tang to it, yet let it stand:

Sacred to the memory
of
Professor ———
of
The Mnemonic Lyceum,
Sydney, N.S.W.
In addition to all the regular virtues, of which he had the generous supply with which it is usual to credit the dead, he was once a whole year early.

This professor, as his tombstone testifies, is an honest man, and would not deceive anybody, but he has, of course, invented a most attractive device for those who would absent themselves from duty two years running. It is now open to any of us with sufficient candour in our countenances and the wish to visit distant and alluring territory—say, for instance, South Africa—to arrange for an invitation to some kind of public function there next year, and then to obtain (under a misappre-

hension) permission from our chief to attend it at once; thus ensuring a double holiday. In a country like England, where to-day almost every nerve seems to be strained in the direction of more and more vacations, this should be a very popular contrivance. The only difficulty would be in suitably comporting the features on the day of return; but that would be after the fun. As a matter of fact, we have never yet heard what the Sydney authorities had to say. . . .

I have, in my time, once or twice been as much as a day early, but that was due not to any morbid desire of mine not to be late, but to a confusion in my hostess's mind between the day of the week and the date of the month. Such confusions are by no means rare, and, in fact, according to a sociological analyst whom I know, may be taken as a basis when we come to compare the differences in the characters of men and women. A woman, he says, thinks of days where a man thinks of dates. A woman will ask you to lunch on Wednesday next; a man will ask you to lunch on the 11th. Should the woman add a date and get it wrong—writing, for example, 'Wednesday, the 10th'—she still means Wednesday; whereas if the man adds the day—as, for example, 'Thursday, the 11th'—he still means the 11th, which is a Wednesday. It is, therefore, wise when issuing invitations to consult a calendar—being

careful that it is of the current year; and having received an invitation, it is wise, on the morning of the day, to ring up and verify. But I hate ringing up.

Had I not so hated ringing up—for I am one of those increasingly astonishing and rapidly disappearing creatures who would rather write a letter and enclose it in an envelope and stick on the stamp and post it than speak one word on the telephone—I should not have arrived to dine a day too soon at the house of a new acquaintance: my first visit. And, incidentally, I may say that such a blunder would supply admirable material for one of those Trials in Tact which used to be popular. What should the hostess do? In the present case my hostess received me without giving me the slightest hint that I was out of order; we dined and had a pleasant evening; but when the time came to say good-bye her last words were: 'You will remember that we are expecting you at eight to-morrow?' Could she have done less? Had she written this, or said it over the telephone, my blushes, it is true, would have been spared; but then we should have missed the laughter and with it the cement that such a *faux pas*, with concomitant mirth, provides. There was the pretty compliment also that I was wanted again so soon.

On the matter of temperamental differences

between men and women, my friend, I might add, has much that is ingenious to say. He has observed, for instance, that a man who is left in his home alone, for no matter how long, will punctiliously take his meals in the dining-room, with all the usual ceremonial about him, whereas his wife, similarly isolated, will snatch at a sandwich and some tea on the top of the piano. Other things that the best women do which the best men don't is to squeeze toothpaste tubes at the top; look at the wrong part of the sky to foretell the weather; relax their hold, when helping with an overcoat, at the precise moment when it should become tense; put soap on sponges; keep windows open in railway tunnels, and walk about during the over.

But we are losing sight of the great date question, which is causing me just now no little trouble and even anxiety, for I had lately to read hundreds of letters written by men of eminence to Sidney Colvin, and hardly one of them mentions the year. Some say Monday. Some say April 8. Some say Monday, April 8. But hardly one adds the year. Nearly all, however, state where the letter is written. Among the writers are such distinguished persons as George Meredith, Henry James, Andrew Lang, Joseph Conrad, W. E. Henley. It is, of course, natural not to put the year, because the year is understood;

the writer knows it and the recipient knows it. But what about the poor biographer in the distant future? He has to seek all kinds of references in order to get his chronology right. I can conceive of no case where the omission of the date and the year is an advantage, although no doubt when falsified they might assist the fraudulent or the criminal; but in the interests of biography their presence is essential, and I adjure any schoolmaster and schoolmistress who may read these words to impress the importance of them on their scholars, some of whom, of course, will in time attain such distinction and success as to be themselves the subject of the biographer's pen. Should these instructors not be willing to add such a matter to the curriculum, we must, all of us who receive letters from either the established great or the potentially famous, ourselves add the year before the precious documents are filed.

THE DAY THAT COMES BETWIXT

ONE of the most striking differences between London and Paris that an English visitor to Paris notices is the Parisians' way with the Day of Rest: their agreeable division of that day into a morning of devotion, among such as profess religion, and an afternoon and evening of recreation and gaiety, as contrasted with our restrictions on public sports and theatres, so that only those who can afford clubs or have lawns of their own can play games, and only those who subscribe in advance can go to the play (and what plays!), and no one can see a horse come in last at all. I am at the moment advancing no argument for any change in the English Sunday, although I may, I hope, be permitted to deplore its inconsistencies; I am merely drawing attention to the differences between it and the French Sunday, and marvelling again that a score of miles of salt water should be so sundering.

The truth remains that, no matter how it is observed, Sunday is, on both sides of the Channel, an event, whether it is anticipated with excitement

or with dread. It is a factor in life, whether it is a red-letter day or an interruption; whether it is part of this week's end or of the next week a beginning. No one can away with it, and no one can satisfactorily substitute another day for it, as such Sunday toilers as journalists and printers have to do. Saturday has great merits, but it can never be Sunday. Sunday has an atmosphere which nothing can impair, although I will admit that there are stretches of the river Thames that do their best. The rooks know when it is Sunday. If one were to go to sleep like Rip Van Winkle, and, after many years, were to awake on a Sunday morning anywhere in England, one would know, while still in bed, that it was Sunday, even though no bells rang.

To me in early years Sunday was a day to be feared, a day of uncongenial cleanliness and sartorial self-consciousness, of weary services and subdued spirits. Books might be read, but they had to be Sunday books; and this reminds me of the anger which I provoked in one of the worthiest Men of God whom I have ever met—a schoolmaster then, and a rural vicar now—when, on his rebuking me for revelling in the *Ingoldsby Legends* on Sunday, I reminded him that they were by a clergyman. No answer to that! At least, there should have been no answer as between gentlemen; but in his capacity of shepherd of lambs

he provided a reply perfect in its force: he took the book away.

On Sundays one might use the paint-box, but only to illuminate texts. Such games as we played involved the co-operation of Holy Writ, and all singing was that of hymns. All outdoor exercise was demure, conditioned partly by the oppression of the day and not a little by the haberdasher and tailor. Small wonder, then, that directly I was able to declare my independence I made Sunday a day of uncensored reading or of country exploration, though never, I hope, ranking myself apologetically among the 'Blue-domers'.

Holy Mr. Herbert (by which adjective I mean no differentiating disrespect to the creator of 'Topsy') had his own very characteristic view of the Day of Rest. 'The Sundays', he wrote:

> 'The Sundays of man's life,
> Threaded together on Time's string,
> Make bracelets to adorn the wife
> Of the eternal glorious King:
> On Sundays Heaven's door stands ope;
> Blessings are plentiful and rife . . .
> More plentiful than hope.'

And although, short of the House of God at Bemerton, I am not disposed to attend church, I agree with him. I find Sunday to be full of blessings and to offer not a little hope. I may devote too much of it to work; yet never have I

been able to look upon it as an ordinary day, and never have I wanted to. It has been a beacon all my life, and is not likely to alter. It is a day on which, however busy I may be, I am conscious of rest, a day to which I look forward as to a holy day, even though the cadences of church bells are, to my ears, the most dismal and disheartening of all the sounds that be.

Personally, I don't mind what is done with the English Sunday, because nothing would now make me view the day or spend the day differently. When I am in Paris on Sunday, I go to the races; I should never go to the races on Sunday in England. Indeed, I can think of nothing so far removed from the Sunday that I cherish as the conditions of an English racecourse. Should county cricket matches ever be played on Sunday, I should not go to them. Should every theatre be open, I should stay away. None the less, I am galled to think that we have, in the matter of Sunday observance, one law for the rich and one for the poor.

Enough of myself. Let those remarks be considered merely as introduction to three Sunday poems which I have lately chanced upon, two of which belong to the Blue-domer school. The first is by a Canadian, Mr. Albert Durrant Watson, and is called 'Priest and Pagan'. It runs thus:

He deemed his task a solemn one,
  And kneeled in sombre garb to pray;
Made much of symbols, ancient rites,
  Of holy book and sacred day.

I on the grass beneath the pine—
  A pagan to my finger-tips,
Accounting every flower divine,
  Breathed incense from its petal lips.

And God, in His almighty love,
  Knowing our need, and nothing loath,
Leaned kindly from His heavens above
  And poured His blessing on us both.

The next is by that very remarkable American lyrical poet, Emily Dickinson, a wealthy recluse with a mind something like Blake's, and a sincerity and vision that often almost scald, so sudden and fierce can they be. This poem, 'A Service of Song', is in her gentlest manner:

Some keep the Sabbath going to church;
  I keep it staying at home,
With a bobolink for a chorister,
  And an orchard for a dome.

Some keep the Sabbath in surplice;
  I just wear my wings,
And instead of tolling the bell for church,
  Our little sexton sings.

God preaches,—a noted clergyman,—
  And the sermon is never long;
So instead of getting to heaven at last,
  I'm going all along!

The last poem is among the less known of the early verses of a favourite author. I wonder how many readers could guess his name? It runs thus:

You looked so tempting in the pew,
  You looked so sly and calm—
My trembling fingers played with yours
  As both looked out the Psalm.

Your heart beat hard against my arm,
  My foot to yours was set,
Your loosened ringlet burned my cheek,
  Whenever they two met.

O little, little we hearkened, dear,
  And little, little cared,
Although the parson sermonized,
  The congregation stared.

So far from being a Blue-dome argument, that poem might have the effect of sending us all to church, even though that may not have been the author's intention. And his name? Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE EAST IN PARIS

IT is one of the pains of authorship that the time is never ripe for the printing of a book. No sooner have the presses done their fell work than afterthoughts arise, all to its betterment. And this is peculiarly the case with books that describe cities and countries, because the builders and the demolishers are busy all the time; new pictures are being added to the galleries and old pictures are being re-hung. The result is that the honest compiler of guide-books has no more rest than the wicked, which is very unfair; while how that most conscientious of the whole tribe, Herr Karl Baedeker, can sleep in his bed is a perpetual problem.

I am moved to these bitter reflections by the circumstance that no sooner had I completed the corrections and additions for a new issue of a book about Paris, than I discovered by chance in that city two new objects of beauty and interest, both calling for mention in that book, and destined now not to be mentioned for a year or so, and perhaps longer, or even never. One of these is

a statue of St. Geneviève, the patron saint of the city, and the other is the Mohammedan mosque.

The statue is uniquely placed: at the southern end of the new bridge over the Seine, the rebuilt Pont de la Tournelle, between the island of St. Louis and the Quai de la Tournelle. It is very high and slender and lustrous, and it is like no other memorial that I have seen. It begins as an obelisk with the quite unnecessary but striking support of a single flying buttress, and then tapers into a figure of the Saint, in front of whom, protected by her caressing hands, is a boy symbolizing the youthful Paris of the fifth century. As you stand among the old bookstalls, facing this strange and alien pillar of stone (almost as foreign as the Egyptian monolith in the Place de la Concorde), you see in the near distance, across the Pont, the broken outline of Notre Dame, and you wonder why the Saint should be looking away from Paris rather than towards it; or if she is not to look towards Notre Dame and the Island of the Cité, as typifying Paris, why she does not look towards the church of St. Etienne du Mont, where her remains lie, or the Panthéon, which is built on the site of her own church. The answer is to be found in a certain inscription with regard to the same holy lady which may not be familiar to many even good Parisians. This has been affixed to her shrine in St. Etienne du Mont.

The first of St. Geneviève's great services to her city, as depicted on the walls of the Panthéon by the fluent lucid hand of Puvis de Chavannes, was, as everyone is aware, the part played by her in the repulse of the invasion of Attila the Hun, in the year 451. The next was when she delivered Paris from Clovis in 497. It may not be as generally known that in 1914 St. Geneviève repeated these feats. A tablet in the church explicitly states that the failure of the German invasion was due to her; and that is why, in this beautiful and arresting statue by Paul Landowski, she looks away from the city and not towards it. She is looking always for the advancing foe.

So much for the Cross; now for the Crescent. I came upon the statue of St. Geneviève while hunting for 'la Mosquée,' for the only direction I could get was that it was somewhere near the Jardin des Plantes. The exact situation is the Place du Puits de l'Hermite at the end of the Rue Quatre Faces, and one rubs one's eyes to find in this squalid quarter a mysterious temple, with a soaring minaret and every oriental circumstance, such as in the ordinary way one finds in our part of the world only as a temporary section of an exhibition. But the Paris mosque is solid enough and will endure. Infidels as well as the elect are admitted on payment of a small fee, and are led round by a melancholy turbaned guide. Once

the portals are passed, you are in the East, but most notably in Morocco, features of one of whose mosques have been here and there reproduced. The courtyards, with their blossoms, their trees and fountains, their tiles of blue and green, and, above all, their dazzling walls catching the sun and cherishing the shadows, are veritable little paradises, and the presence of the grave robed figures, with dark inscrutable faces, who have been praying on their rugs, or are on their way to prayer, causes Paris to recede farther and farther into unreality.

To me the decoration of all mosques is impressive; but I cannot remember seeing anything more beautiful than some of the filigree work on these walls and in the great praying-room with its forest of pillars made visible by a dim luminosity: a fusion of myriad lamps and the light of day as it filters through the delicate iron grille of the windows. Beneath these windows, every one of which has a different design, are recesses for hundreds of pairs of believers' shoes.

But worship is not the sole concern of this Mohammedan oasis in the City of Light, for within the parallelogram that contains the mosque there is a large and heavily-scented shop for rugs and robes and cushions and hammered brass, and all the wares which we associate with the Cairo street at a World's Fair, with precisely the same

kind of seductive unhastening salesmen; a very fine Hammam; and a café where you lounge on divans and listen to what the East calls music played by sleepy-eyed performers, or, in a little courtyard among orange trees, sip the muddy stuff which the Turk calls coffee. In the name of the Prophet, no alcohol is served.

A very strange place, this Institut Musulman, and one to remember when the Grands Boulevards have imposed too much of the nervous West on one's tired sensorium. I should like to visit it on a day set apart for special devotions and see what the numerical strength of the Paris Mohammedan is.

WAX AND WAISTCOATS

I REMEMBER a Scottish painter's story of a Glasgow civic official who, after the finishing touches to the portrait had been applied, was invited to the studio. Every one present praised the likeness, except the sitter, who merely scowled. 'Whaur's ma Albert?' he demanded, and would accept no artistic sophistry as to the colour scheme, or whatever it was, being impaired by the presence of a heavy gold watch-chain. Walking through Madame Tussaud's renovated galleries, I realized that the bailee should have been moulded in wax, because when one is represented in that medium the Albert is an accessory rarely forgotten; in fact, all our public men seem to wear the same kind, and not only to wear it, but to wear it in a very odd place, just below the necktie, in symmetrical loops. My personal knowledge of the illustrious is too limited for me to be able to check this fashion; but I could not help wondering if there may not have been an error.

I wondered also why there is such laxity in the matter of height. Faces (and watch-chains) are

not all; there should be some respect for inches. The outsize figures do nothing towards adding to the reality of their neighbours. The late lamented Rudolph Valentino, for example, dwarfs his companions of the stage proper. George Washington is far larger than he is in his statue in the fig-leaved garden of the National Gallery. Henry VIII no doubt was big, but here he is a giant, with a vast, spreading face, whereas Edward VI, close by, has been given the features of a marmoset. Charles I was so small as to be sensitive about it, but the modeller has made him colossal. The late Lord Haldane never in life gave me the impression that he was a circus Hercules, but that suggestion is strong in his wax embodiment.

I wish the catalogue was more informative about the new exhibition and the fire which destroyed the old. I should like to know how many survivals there were, and how many of the old figures have had to be reconstructed. Sir Henry Irving obviously was rescued, for the catalogue says 'Modelled from life'. I seem to recognize the Dan Leno too; but Lord Darling's poem, published just after the conflagration, led us to think that the whole population flowed down the steps to the Marylebone Road in a waxen spate. The preface to the catalogue, since it is dated 1892, could hardly tell us, and further informa-

tion is withheld. Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the best figures in all the galleries, both under his own style and when he is called Lord Salisbury, but the words 'Modelled from life' do not accompany his name. In fact, in all the hundreds of entries I found 'Modelled from life' only fifteen times. Among these authentic portraits are Madame Tussaud herself, Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Marwood the hangman, and the Oval paragon, J. B. Hobbs.

Two figures in particular I observed with care, not for their conspicuous merit, but for a reason more special: Charles Dickens, seated and looking anything but the creator of the second world, and William Charles Macready, dressed as Macbeth, but lacking any suggestion of that tragic weakling's tragedy. The peculiar interest of these two effigies is their proximity—it is just across the road—to a house where one of them lived and one of them was a constant guest: No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, which was Dickens's home in the eighteen-forties, from 1839 to 1851. It was in this house that he wrote *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *David Copperfield*, and the best of the Christmas books. It was in this house also that he wrote—for this amazing creature not only poured out his novels, every word in his own hand, and then (as you can see if you go to the Dyce and Forster Room at South

Kensington and look at the original manuscripts) many of the words rewritten, so that there were practically two parallel stories each time, but found leisure for long and diverting letters to his friends —it was in this house that he wrote the famous note to Macready asking for the loan of a waistcoat. I meant merely to quote from this epistolary jewel, but on re-reading it I find that that would be a crime. Here, therefore, for those who know it yet cannot but rejoice to see it again, is the request in full:

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Friday Evening, October 17, 1845.

MY DEAR MACREADY,—

You once—only once—gave the world assurance of a waistcoat. You wore it, sir, I think in 'Money.' It was a remarkable and precious waistcoat, wherein certain broad strips of blue or purple disported themselves as by a combination of extraordinary circumstances too happy to occur again. I have seen it on your manly chest in private life. I saw it, sir, I think, the other day in the cold light of morning with feelings easier to be imagined than described. Mr. Macready, sir, are you a father? If so, lend me that waistcoat for five minutes. I am bidden to a wedding (where fathers are made), and my artist cannot, I find (how should he?), imagine

such a waistcoat. Let me show it to him as a sample of my tastes and wishes; and—ha, ha, ha, ha!—eclipse the bridegroom!

I will send a trusty messenger at half-past nine precisely, in the morning. He is sworn to secrecy. He durst not for his life betray us, or swells in ambuscade would have the waistcoat at the cost of his heart's blood.—Thine,

THE UNWAISTCOATED ONE.

I found it pleasant, after so much staring inanimation and impersonal apparel, to be reminded of the power and vitality of Dickens, and the decorative floridity of his histrionic friend. The days of fancy vests, how long ago they seem, and will they return? One of the last of these festive garments seen by me in real life covered the considerable chest of George Augustus Sala, the author of the introduction to the Tussaud catalogue. It was at Victoria Station in the eighteen-eighties.

Sala was a friend of Dickens, and had I grasped his hand I should have been so much the nearer to the great man; but I was a stranger, merely a gaping youth. There are, however, other links. Twice have I been in 1, Devonshire Terrace, the first time some years ago to consult a lawyer, the second time recently, when I dined with its present owner and was allowed to roam all over

it, with a reconstructing eye. Where had Dickens written that delicious letter? Where did he stand as he tried the waistcoat on? In this room did he add perfecting touches to the character of Wilkins Micawber? It must be a profoundly exciting thing to live in a house once occupied by such a genius—and at the top of his form—and I envy its tenant.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

THE recent return of M. Paderewski—or, as he would be announced in a drawing-room, Sir Ignace Paderewski—to the London concert platform was an event to send the memory of the elderly back to the first English appearances of this enchanting virtuoso. They began in 1890, when he was thirty, and when his already honoured head wore an aureole of golden hair which won for him the nickname of 'The Human Chrysanthemum'. To-day that still more honoured head is white, not solely through the passing of years, but from the cares of State and the anxieties of the patriot; and no one makes the floral comparison any more.

Yet, turning from the human chrysanthemum to the natural, we find that the career of the Polish pianist coincides with a period of unusual energy and enterprise among horticulturists, during which time the chrysanthemum, in common with many other blooms, has passed through such stages of development as to leave its simple past nowhere. This enterprise was due not a little

to that great lady, Miss Gertrude Jekyll, whose two epoch-making works, *Wood and Garden* and *Home and Garden*, were published in 1899 and 1900 respectively. Before the appearance of these works and *The English Flower Garden*, by Miss Jekyll's friend and coadjutor, Mr. William Robinson, flowers had been, generally speaking, true to their old-fashioned type, and gentlemen's gardeners faithful to the lobelia, the calceolaria, and the geranium. But now came in new ideas and new ambitions, and, on the part of the nurserymen, the determination to leave nothing where it was. Miss Jekyll must have been glad to see both the humble flowers of the meadow, hedgerow, and coppice, and the favourites of the cottagers, invited into the squire's parterre and smiled upon and encouraged, but whether she was equally gratified when the old simplicity began to give way to aggrandisement and sophistication, not always improvements on the norm, I cannot say, but doubt. The fact remains that where, thirty years ago, there was, so to speak, only one type of bloom, there are now scores, if not hundreds, of varieties.

Adam was, one supposes, when the newly created animals filed past him, called upon to give a name to single specimens only. There was, for instance, but one dog—a creature approximating probably more to the wolf than to the

Pekinese. 'Dog', said Adam, and made ready for the next applicant. Were Adam to-day to be taken to Cruft's, he would be strangely perturbed; but his state of perplexity would be calmness compared with that of Eve, had she been called upon in the same way (as she ought to have been, and possibly was,) to name the flowers, and were taken to-day to a Royal Horticultural Show; for there one finds dahlias of myriad complexions and sizes, and in equal or greater profusion and variegation, a flower far dearer to my own heart —the chrysanthemum—which also has been subjected by the scientific florist to thousands of experiments. In the year 4004 B.C. Eve probably would have been shown but one scrubby little chestnut head; to-day, in 1929, there is probably not a single shade between the palest saffron and the darkest umber which is not proudly flown by this loyal and stately plant, and hardly a garden in which a few do not glow and burnish. The shape also has changed; the petals have been lengthened as well as tinted anew, so that some extend like the rays of the sun, and some twist and writhe, like the tentacles of the octopus, to show their double hues, over and under.

Thinking of them, I am reminded of an interview with Signor Pirandello, the Italian dramatist, in which, when he was asked for the story of his first love, he fenced by recalling a passage in

Marco Polo about the Tartar custom of betrothing dead children. Thus 'If a man have a son dead, when the time cometh that he would give him a wife, if he were yet alive, then presently he seeketh out some other man that hath likewise a dead daughter, meet and proper for his son, and so they do make kinship together, and bestow the dead maiden in wedlock upon the dead son. Whereof they make certain instruments in writing and anon they burn them; and no sooner do they perceive the smoke to ascend upwards than they say that these writings are gone into that other world where their dead babes be, and that the babes do hold each the other as man and wife in that other world.'

'You see', Signor Pirandello continued, 'it is a perfectly regular marriage, and there are perfectly regular offspring. In fact, every autumn they are all around us, and, motionless and silent, these children of the dead boys and girls seem at times more lovely than living children. All of them have beautiful rounded heads; some crowned with tenderest curls of crocus-coloured yellow; others of tawny, slightly shaggy gold; others, again, white and soft like freshly fallen snow. Yet all of them in their gorgeous beauty have a certain air of sadness and aloofness—an indefinable something that strikes chill to the heart and impels you to embrace the living children, although not so

beautiful nor so well brought up. In short,' he summed up, 'the children of the dead boys and girls, of the loves buried before their time in the melancholy of the Infinite, they are the chrysanthemums.'

A pretty fancy! Meanwhile, without allowing thoughts of Tartary and its shadowy lovers too much to possess and oppress my mind, I shall continue to extract a material earthly solace from the odd, searching scent of these flowers, which, among their other great qualities, have that of living longer, when cut, than most, and longer still if, as the Japanese do, you thrust the stalks for a moment into the fire and thus seal up their sap.

SAM BEAZLEY

CERTAIN differences between France and England are easy to understand—as, for instance, why the French should eat and drink on pavements and the English indoors; it is a case of climate—but I see no reason whatever why French architects should sign their buildings, while English architects remain anonymous. Is it that the English architects are ashamed? I think not. But there the fact remains, and as architecture is, of all works of art, that which has a way of becoming least personal, the result is that it is very difficult, even for a rival or an expert, standing before any given structure in England, to guess accurately who was its designer.

The explanation of the want of personality in the architecture that we see is simple. When any other kind of artist creates, he is free. A poet's lyric, a painter's picture, a writer's essay, a composer's concerto—all these works bear the marks of their author's individuality. They were devised to express, without deference to the opinion of others, the feelings of their makers. But an

architect is not planning for himself, but for a client or a committee or a board of directors, and at every turn his ideas are modified either by the wishes of his employers or by the necessity for economy. In effect, then, the building that eventually rises is a compromise. That is why, when we do, and very rarely, find the architect's signature (as, for example, on the façade of the Armenian church in Kensington, or on the Safe Deposit at the end of Carlton Street), we assume that there was no trouble, that every one was satisfied.

It is, perhaps, because of their constant conflict with clients—not to mention contractors, foremen, and town and borough and rural authorities—that architects are the sombre and slightly sardonic creatures that I have found them. How could they be otherwise? It is notorious that publishers and editors can be thorns in the flesh of authors, that entrepreneurs can make it difficult for musicians, and that art dealers have worn artists to shadows; but the pitfalls that beset the path of the architect are far more numerous, serious, and hard to avoid. I can think of nothing more distasteful than, after designing the most beautiful and adequate house in which a rich man could live, to have to cut off a gable here, a chimney-stack there, or even a whole wing. Yet this is the architect's daily experience. Joyless and

embittered in their lives, they pass untimely to their tombs.

There are, however, exceptions. I could testify to one notable exception now living, and I have just found in a volume of reminiscences the account of another who flourished long ago, Samuel Beazley by name, whose career covered the first half of the nineteenth century. Beazley was indeed out of the ordinary, being, I suppose, one of the few architects who were also dramatists. Having built a theatre—and he built many—he wrote a play to be produced in it. I don't say that Sir Edwin Lutyens, of whom Beazley often reminds me, could not do that; but has he done it? No. It was Beazley who built Drury Lane, or at any rate its colonnade: the theatre which sprang, it will be remembered by readers of *Rejected Addresses*, in any way but phœnix-like from the ashes of the old; and the Brothers Smith, who wrote *Rejected Addresses*, were among the architect's closest friends and most determined allies in the art of punning, of which he was a master. He built the Lyceum, and the St. James's, and the Strand façade of the Adelphi, later in life becoming architect of the South-Eastern Railway, for which he made London Bridge terminus and stations all over the line. Every one knows the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover, that solid and imposing cube on the

water's edge, where, when it is too rough, passengers to France wait while the sea subsides, and where, after a distressing voyage, passengers to England pause to recover from the violence of the waves; where, also, the moon of honey has been known to rise. Well, Beazley built that. And he found time to write a hundred farces as well, and the English versions of several operas, chief of them 'La Sonnambula', which he adapted to the pronunciation of Malibran by composing it in interviews at her bedside.

I should like to know more of Samuel Beazley, who seems to have been among the best of men, and certainly is the most genial of the architects of the past.

> Here lies Samuel Beazley,
> Who lived hard and died easily,

was his epitaph on himself; but it was not quite true, for his death was long and painful. One day, indeed, towards the end, he was in such suffering that he forgot (says J. R. Planché, my informant) his usual high spirits and wrote a complaining letter to a friend. The friend likened it to the first chapter of Jeremiah. 'No,' said the dying man: 'the last chapter of Samuel.' Money, although he earned much, he had none—or, at any rate, never had any with him. Planché, returning once behind Beazley's horses from a

dinner, felicitated him on being so wealthy and independent as to possess an equipage. 'Yes,' he said, 'I have a carriage, a cabriolet, a stable, a coachman, a footman, a large house, a cook and three maidservants, a mother, a sister, and—half-a-crown.' This did not, however, prevent him from being the soul of generosity, while if 'at a party or a ball there was a lady who appeared neglected because she was old, ill-favoured or uninteresting, Beazley was sure to pay her his most respectful and delicate attentions'.

Although puns are still not unknown in architects' gatherings, a few of Beazley's may bear quotation. Some brandy that had belonged to his father he described, after Hamlet, as 'the spirit of my sainted sire'; and when building a staircase for Sir Henry and Lady Meux, he said he was at work on a new *Gradus ad Parnassum*: steps to the Muses. To a lady who asked why the rooks made such a noise, he said he could not say, but they clearly had caws for conversation. But best of his replies, to my mind, was his suggestion, when the question arose how to anglicize the title of Hérold's opera *Le Pré aux Clercs*: 'Call it,' he said, 'Parsons' Green'. He died, greatly regretted by a vast number of friends, in 1851.

TWO ONE-LEGGED MEN

I WAS astonished in Norfolk Street, off the Strand, one morning, to find a one-legged man, dressed in spotless singlet and shorts, leaping a pole which he had poised at the side of the road. Although furnished with only a moiety of our normal jumping apparatus, he cleared great heights, and the passers-by were far more generous in their contributions to his cap than often we are to screevers and street musicians. This was early in the day—about ten o'clock—and if he was to continue to earn his living like that until dewy eve he would need to be a very strong fellow. He seemed, so to speak, to bring to life, like a movie, the American simile: 'As busy as a one-legged man in a forest fire.' And could there be a more curious or strenuous mode of livelihood? The woman of whom I heard when I was in America that amassed a fortune by taking the curl out of negresses' hair, had seemed to follow as odd a career as any that I knew; but for a one-legged man to thrive on jumping—that is almost as remarkable as the

success of the one-armed juggler in *The Wallet of Kai Lung*.

Was there not, however, in my infancy at Brighton, a Spanish gentleman with one leg, who spun teetotum-wise for pence? He arrived on the Front in a bath-chair pushed by his wife, and when a sufficient ring had been formed, alighted with the assistance of a crutch and began his gyrations, attaining to such speed that his black robes flew horizontally out. His name was Don Patos.

The unusual acrobat of Norfolk Street did me an intellectual service by reminding me of one of Goldsmith's best satirical papers (which in the time of Don Patos I had not yet alighted upon), and sending me again to the works of that perfect writer. One of the sadder things of life is our inability to keep up with our favourite authors of the past, except on the principle of reading an old book to mark the arrival of a new. But that is a procedure of perfection. The ordinary person, even when of what is called the leisured class, cannot be as negligent of the thoughts and manners of his own time as to follow that superior example; while busy people who were always thus ringing in the old would know nothing of current literature at all. Hence it is that not for far too long have I had a volume of Goldsmith in my hand.

The particular bloom of little Goldy's whimsical and quizzical genius that I was seeking was that sly and most admirable exercise in irony, *The History of the Distresses of an English Disabled Soldier*, because the simple figure there revealed had, like my Norfolk Street friend (who was probably an ex-Service man himself), but one original leg left, the missing article, in his case, being supplied by wood. Let me condense the narrative of this poor fellow's misfortunes.

At his father's death the boy was put into a workhouse, where he led an easy kind of life for five years. 'I wrought', he says, 'only ten hours in the day'. Then becoming a wandering labourer, he was so unlucky as to kill a hare belonging to a J.P. and was sent by the J.P. to Newgate in order to be transported as a vagabond. 'People may say this and that of being in jail; but, for my part, I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever in my life.' Imprisonment was, however, too good to last, and after five months he was put on board a ship, with two hundred more, for the plantations. 'We had but an indifferent passage, for, being all confined in the hold, more than a hundred of our people died for want of sweet air, and these that remained were sickly enough, God knows.'

After seven years labouring for a planter among negroes, our hero's time expired and he worked

his way home. 'I was glad to see Old England again, because I loved my country.' Not long after, however, he was knocked down by the press-gang, and forced to become a soldier, served two campaigns in Flanders, was at Val and Fontenoy, and received a wound in the chest. He then enlisted as a landsman in the East India Company's service, and fought the French in six pitched battles. 'I verily believe that if I could read or write, our captain would have made me a corporal.'

Before his vessel could reach home he was pressed for a sailor, captured by the French, and imprisoned in Brest. 'I hate the French because they are all slaves and wear wooden shoes.' He and some companions, escaping from jail, seized a boat and got out of the harbour, but only to be taken by the Dorset privateer and forced to join its crew. 'In three days we fell in with the *Pompadour* privateer of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three; so to it we went, yard-arm and yard-arm. I verily believe we should have taken the Frenchmen, had we but had some more men left behind; but unfortunately we lost all our men just as we were going to get the victory.' (Here we find Goldsmith anticipating a later satirist, W. S. Gilbert. The sailor's song in 'Ruddigore', emphasizing French inferiority at sea, is very much in the same manner.)

The soldier continues: 'I had almost forgot to tell you that in that engagement I was wounded in two places. I lost four fingers of the left hand and my leg was shot off. If I had had the good fortune to have lost my leg and the use of my hand on board a King's ship, and not aboard a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life. But that was not my chance: one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God! I enjoy good health, and will ever love liberty and Old England. Liberty, property, and Old England for ever, huzza!'

Any reader of these passages who is sent to the shelves to take down Oliver Goldsmith and renew acquaintance with him is to be envied. And particularly if he alights upon *The Citizen of the World*. He will then meet the Man in Black and Beau Tibbs, and Mrs. Tibbs, and the Chinese Philosopher with his deadly penetration. And everywhere he will find humanity, humour, and the most easy and charming of literary styles.

As I stood beside Goldsmith's plain slab at the side of the Temple Church a day or so after re-reading these essays, it occurred to me that it was a curious chance that made this abode of lawyers the home of the two English writers of the eighteenth century who are most beloved.

For whereas Oliver Goldsmith lived for some years in Garden Court, and later at 2, Brick Court, and died there on April 4, 1774, Charles Lamb was born on February 10, 1775, at 2, Crown Office Row, only a stone's throw away, and lodged later both in Mitre Court Buildings and Inner Temple Lane. Out of strength (or shall we say, in this connexion, craft?) cometh forth sweetness.

And the Temple's association with the more personal and benignly smiling side of literature does not end there. A later tenant of the Brick Court rooms was one William Makepeace Thackeray, author of the *Roundabout Papers*.

CRICKET N.B.

THE announcement that the author of *A Window in Thrums* was presenting his birthplace, Kirriemuir, with a cricket pavilion may have led to a little surprise, because cricket and Scotland are not much associated in our minds. We know that those hardy invaders are apt at golf, which has even been called Scotch croquet, and that they can curl, and toss the caber, and often play Rugby too well for the Southerner; but on its northern progress village cricket, in the uninstructed mind's-eye, stops at Yorkshire. The famous Scotch figures whom every follower of the game must be able to recall—such as, to name at the moment only two or three, the superb Gregor McGregor, who kept wicket for Cambridge, for Middlesex, for the Gentlemen, and for England; and the light-hearted Nigel Haig, who does so much to bring cheerfulness to Lord's to-day—these we have supposed learned their cricket at schools or Universities south of the Tweed. Among my own early recollections is the polished batting of J. M. Cotterill, who came

from Scotland to play for Sussex. But such isolated cases have never led us to think that Scotland was a nursery of the game. For how should Caledonia stern and wild prepare pitches? we ask ourselves. Yet we are wrong: Scotland has many a sward where runs may be made, and in Forfarshire they are particularly keen, and Sir James Barrie (whose slow lefts used to be very effective —a little like Mr. J. C. White's) has again had an inspiration.

The sporadic character of first-class cricket has always been rather puzzling to me, and not less so since the invention of the motor-car has made it possible to see so much of England. There is good reason why Cumberland and Westmorland should not be too friendly to the game, because they are mountainous and attract rain. Rutland, of course, notoriously has not room for a cricket ground. Shropshire and Herefordshire are hilly. Devonshire gives way too much to a passion for moors. But why cannot eleven players of first-class quality be trained on the level meads of Wiltshire and Dorset, Berkshire and Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk? This is a great mystery. One does not want them necessarily to play all the other counties; one wants to know why cricket should be less ardently pursued in one county favourable to

it than in another. One wants to know why the tide left a county. Did Norfolk's interest in cricket die with Fuller Pilch? Was it because there were no more Carpenters and Haywards that Cambridgeshire cooled?

To return to Scotland, it chances that at the same time that I read about Sir James Barrie's pavilion I received a handsome book, which must be said to settle, once and for all, the question whether or not the Scots are cricketers, for it is entitled *Annals of Brechin Cricket*, 1849–1927, written by Mr. Alfred O'Neill (whose name is to be found in the scores for many years), with a foreword by the Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne. Brechin, like Kirriemuir, its ancient enemy, is in Forfarshire, which is a long way north, and the club has provided three international players in Douglas Ferrier, one of several distinguished brothers, W. Eddie and J. W. Sorrie. The great name of L. M. Balfour-Melville occurs often in the book as an antagonist of the Brechiners, playing for the Glamis Castle eleven, all among the Lyons. The Lord Glamis of those days, now the Earl of Strathmore, was once congratulated by a stuttering labourer, during the interval, in these cordial terms: 'Yi'rr a-a bloo-o-omin' fi-fi-fine b-b-ooler, Maister Glamis. Yi did rael weel th' day.' A story that is usually associated with our own 'W.G.' is here

told about the 'W.G.' of Scotland, as Balfour-Melville was called: how he was given not out l.b.w. from the first ball he received, and stayed in to make 99. 'But surely he was out?' someone afterwards asked the umpire, Dr. Anderson. 'Of course he was,' said the doctor, 'but I'd never seen him bat.' A contemporary of this far from upright though very human judge was the Brechiner, James Adam, who had a deadly yorker. 'Sharp as a needle in the field,' writes the historian, 'ever with a jaunty step and smiling face, he was verily the sunshine of cricket.' It was not, however, a Brechiner but Peter Lindsay, the Kirriemuir all-rounder, who does the most remarkable thing in the book, for once, even after he had become a veteran, he took six wickets with six consecutive balls.

That Scotland could be interested in our national game as far back as 1849 we find from an account of a match in the Montrose *Standard*, where we have such reportorial tropes as these:

> Martin joined Sir James, but had no sooner taken his stand than he agreed to retire, at the urgent request of Rodgers, who shattered his nerves with a bailer. . . .
>
> Murray, after batting for a few minutes, 'with all the feeling and quaintness of past ages,' heard an ominous crash in the rear, and on turning round had his feelings so much shocked by the appearance of his stumps that he retired horrified for a one. . . .

Sir James Baird, in attempting a severe hit off a full-pitched ball from Rodgers, struck it with the edge of his bat, which sent it into a purer atmosphere, a chance of which Smeaton availed himself.

But if it is a surprise to find that Scotland plays cricket so much and that one small club can provide material for a portly volume, how will the news be received that a guide to cricket for Frenchmen has been published? A copy lies before me—*Le Cricket pour les Sportsmen Français*, by R. Macdonald Lucas (no nepotism is at work here). In this sprightly work, which, though serious in intention, is informed by a gay humour and which has some amusing pictures and diagrams, the whole game is set forth with such clearness that did he give his strenuous logical mind to it, M. Poincaré might be able to lead a team into the field against England. My namesake believes the game to be of the utmost antiquity—indeed, he has a drawing of a match in the Garden of Eden with Adam bowling, Eve batting, and the Serpent as umpire, while he uses a hypothetical match between Old Testament notabilities as his first example. In this struggle some very odd things occurred: Cain was out through handling the ball, Abel hit it twice, Moses obstructed the field, and Jonah's substitute was run out. Cain seems to have been the wicket-keeper. A copious vocabulary turns the

old familiar phrases into the language of diplomacy. Thus: l.b.w. becomes jambe-devant-guichet, while this is the admirable definition of a yorker: 'Un service qui touche terre dans l'enchoche faite par la batte—assez difficile à jouer! Un batteur qui s'avance peut la jouerà la volée—mais au risque d'être "pris sorti" (stumped) par le garde-guichet, ou "boulé," s'il la manque!' Paris now has its Anglo-Franco contests regularly through the summer, and here again I fancy that Sir James Barrie is to some extent implicated, for I believe that a match between the 'Peter Pan' company and some other team, organized by him twenty years ago, first drew the attention of many Parisians to the game.

OLD WORDS AND NEW

'I WISH', says a correspondent, 'you would write an article on the shortage of words to express certain things. "Interesting" is flagrantly an overworked term, and "sensational" is another. But there are swarms. Ours is, in fact, for all the masterpieces that have been produced in it, a very limited language.' If I merely remark that this request came at an opportune moment, I am grossly understating the case, for I can affirm with truth that my friend's grievance has been on my mind day after day for very many years; and I imagine that there are few professional writers who have not been equally disturbed by it—particularly, perhaps, critics, no matter what form of creative art they appraise. How they must recoil from that same 'interesting', and from 'attractive' and 'engaging' and 'charming' and 'convincing' and 'unconvincing' and 'realistic' and 'fanciful' and 'admirable' and 'unworthy' and 'advanced' and 'daring' and even poor old 'meritorious'—all the old brigade!

That sub-university system of education—or,

at any rate, device for disseminating mixed knowledge—the cross-word puzzle, has no doubt extended many vocabularies; but it does nothing towards replacing 'interesting', which is the real bugbear of the descriptive writer. Turning to the latest edition of Peter Mark Roget's *Thesaurus*, which has been brought up to date (with one eye, I fancy, on the cross-worder) by his grandson Mr. Samuel Romilly Roget, I find that its only mention in the index is under 'lovable', the other synonyms for which, and therefore I suppose for 'interesting', too, I find to be: 'adorable, lovely, sweet, attractive, seductive, winning, charming, engaging, enchanting, captivating, fascinating, bewitching, amiable, like an angel, angelic, seraphic'.

Here I must confess that the Messrs. Roget have grievously disappointed me. 'Interesting' should have its own entry and importance. 'Interest', however, I find is a synonym for 'excite', sharing that honour with: 'affect, touch, move, impress, strike, animate, inspire, impassion, smite, infect; stir the blood, fire the blood, warm the blood; set astir; awake, wake; awaken, wake up; call forth; evoke, provoke; raise up, summon up, call up, wake up, blow up, get up, light up; raise; get up steam, rouse, arouse, stir, fire, kindle, enkindle, apply the torch, set on fire, inflame, illuminate'. As an example of the

paternal interest (there it is again!) taken by these partners in lexicology, look at their information concerning the word 'cry': 'weep, sob, greet, blubber, pipe, snivel, bibber, whimper, pule; pipe one's eye; drop tears, shed tears, shed a tear; melt into tears, burst into tears; cry oneself blind, cry one's eyes out'. What an inter—— I mean what an adm—— well, what a book! Yet even with Messrs. Roget's assistance towards saying everything in ten different ways, almost every article or book that one picks up contains only our old, old, well-worn friends.

The creator of the *Thesaurus*, Peter Mark Roget, was, I find, a physician of Swiss extraction, the nephew of Sir Samuel Romilly, the lawyer. He was born in London in 1779 and graduated M.D. at Edinburgh when he was only nineteen. Thereafter he lived a lengthy life of industry and usefulness. His first-aid to authors in distress, the famous *Thesaurus*, appeared in 1852, and it is by that work that his name is best known, and will live; but his activities were constant and were always marked by ingenuity and originality. Thus, he invented a sliding rule 'so graduated as to be a measure of the power of numbers', which procured him his F.R.S. He founded (a century before cross-words) the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and he helped to establish the University of London, while, as a chess-

player, he invented a pocket-board and devised a way of 'moving the Knight over every square of the board without going twice over any one, commencing at a given square and ending at any other given square of a different colour.' Very int——. And all the time he was writing on medical and scientific subjects, lecturing, presiding, and acting as a medical practitioner. Not till he was nearly ninety-one did he die.

It is new adjectives that we really need. New substantives abound, in bewildering profusion, for every invention brings a retinue with it. Look, for example, at the window of any wireless gadget shop and read the labels. Who, before 1894, had heard of carburetters, sparking plugs and garages? Who, before 1914, had heard of camouflage and Blighty? And then there are the names of prominent persons, whether famous or infamous, to fill our thoughts. Take Mlle Lenglen. Who had ever heard that name before Suzanne arose? One day she was not; the next, by reason of hitting a ball with more than common accuracy, she dominated us, and Lenglen became a synonym for remarkable lawn-tennis as apt as Grace for cricket.

Heroes and athletes, however, no matter what their starriness, are left behind in the realms of neology by a class of public character whose reign, though commonly shorter, shines while it lasts

with a light of the first magnitude. Athletes, after all, appeal only to those persons who are interested in their forms of athletics. Even Lindbergh's syllables can fail to quicken the pulse of certain earth-clinging die-hards. But let a man commit a murder, even an ordinary murder, far less elaborate and thorough than the dismemberment of a wife and subsequent incineration of the remains in a stove, and then evade capture for a few days, even without the companionship of a girl dressed in trousers and high-heeled boots, and no matter what his name is, and no matter how ordinary, it will be everywhere thought about and spoken; and if it be not at all ordinary, but unique, it will never be forgotten. The male-factor in the 'Brides in the Bath' case—ask any persons who are over a certain age what his name was, and they will probably give you instantly the true answer, banal though it be: Smith. How much more likely, then, first to capture the imagination and then to cling to the memory, was the name of Crippen?

When verbs are coined from criminals' names their fame or infamy is kept alive for ever. We still use the verb to burke, meaning, in its widened sense, to suppress, or finally to interrupt. No one knew the word before the year 1828, when William Burke and William Hare were at last brought to justice for a successful career of murder

which had occupied many months. Their system was to lure certain likely individuals into the poorer lodging-houses of Edinburgh, intoxicate them, and then smother them in such a way as to leave no traces of violence. In these proceedings Mrs. Burke and Mrs. Hare proved themselves true helpmates. The bodies were then removed and sold to an Edinburgh surgeon for his anatomy class. Gradually the rumour of the disappearances grew into a terror by night, until people were afraid to go into the streets at all. Burke was tried in December, 1828, and, on the testimony of his partner, who turned King's evidence, was, on January 28, 1829, executed. The huge assembly that attended, thinking hanging too good for him, or wishing for more symmetry in the proceedings, clamoured that he should be 'burked'. 'Burke him! Burke him!' they cried. He was not burked, but ever since then the word has been in use. As for Hare, he was spirited away into England, where he changed his name and passed into complete oblivion. It would be int—— to know what name he took.

THE MARQUIS DE VAUVENARGUES

THE French, who, though so careless of the single life, are so careful of the memory of their illustrious dead, a little while ago held a service of great beauty in honour of the men of letters who had died in the war. The ceremonial began at Notre Dame, and was completed at the Panthéon, where a permanent memorial was unveiled. Were we given to such public displays of pride and emotion, something of the same kind might be done here, in the crypt of St. Paul's. There was but one oration in the Panthéon, and that was delivered by M. Herriot, and in it, I noticed, he referred to Vauvenargues, the author of so much epigrammatic wisdom, as also a victim of the battlefield, prematurely cut off. I have always been an admirer of Vauvenargues, and, without any knowledge of his history, it came as a surprise to me to learn both that he was a soldier and that he died young. I had thought of him as peaceful and mature. I therefore looked into his career, and find that this often profound and always provocative commen-

tator on man and morals was dead at an age when even athletes, cricketers, footballers, and lawn-tennis players (of all of whom he might have said some enlightening things) are still young: thirty-one.

Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues, was born at Aix, in Provence (later to be the parent both of Zola and of Cézanne), on August 6, 1715. When of age he became a soldier in the French Army, and served for ten years. He fought in Italy, and in Silesia in alliance with Frederick the Great; but having his legs frozen on the retreat from Prague, was never strong again. After certain vicissitudes, due both to illness and poverty, he was able to make a home in Paris, where his chief friends were Voltaire and Marmontel. His *Introduction à la Connaissance de l'Esprit Humain* (comprising the maxims) came out in 1746, and the next year he was dead.

The maxims of Vauvenargues, though acid enough and penetrating enough at times, have often a mellowness, a kindliness, that we do not find in La Rochefoucauld, but I doubt if they are less searching. The difference is the difference between the two philosophers. Both sought the truth, but whereas La Rochefoucauld was a cynic, Vauvenargues could be disposed to optimism. As he himself says of his predecessor:

'If the illustrious author of the "Maxims" had been such as he has tried to represent all men, would he deserve our veneration and the idolatrous worship of his disciples?' I have made a selection, not by any means at random, of Vauvenargues's sayings, and I wish there were more space so that it might be longer. I ask the reader, while perusing them, to remember that Vauvenargues himself says: 'Few maxims are true from every point of view'. There is nothing that follows that is not sound, and yet nothing that would not make the basis of a lively discussion. I have used the admirable translation of Mr. F. Y. Eccles.

When a thought is too weak to bear a plain statement it is a sign you should throw it aside.

If you would utter something great, begin with the habit of saying nothing untrue.

Young men suffer less by their own mistakes than by the cautiousness of old ones.

If men did not flatter one another society could hardly exist.

Whoever has seen masks dance together like friends at a ball, and take hands (though unacquainted) and part the next moment never to meet again, may form some notion of this world.

It is odd to think that when two men are equally anxious to grow rich, one may try the way of open fraud, and the other that of plain dealing—and both may be successful.

All men are born guileless and die deceitful.

Little help is to be got from old men, because most of them have enough to do with living and hoarding and are not concerned with the rest.

There are men who live happy and do not know it.

A young woman has not so many flatterers as a rich man who lives well.

Virtue fills a throne more proudly than caution: great-heartedness is the proper quality of kings.

Sickness suspends our virtues and our vices.

It may be true our joys are short-lived, but most of our griefs do not last long.

Though men in great positions are easily flattered, we are still more easily flattered when in their company.

However fond one may be of great affairs, there are few sorts of reading so tedious and tiring as the articles of a treaty between sovereigns.

One that has much sense has a deal of knowledge.

How many virtues and vices are unimportant!

Love is not so fastidious as self-love.

There is no counterfeiting genius.

Of how little use is the best advice since we are so seldom taught by our own experience!

Despair is the greatest of mistakes.

No man has wit enough to be never wearisome.

Discretion is the tyrant of the weak.

It is untrue that equality is a law of nature. Nature has made nothing equal. Her law is subordination and dependency.

A large eater with a weak digestion is perhaps a fair likeness of the order of mind owned by most learned men.

Great success is commoner than great abilities.

One who knows how to make his very wastefulness profitable is superior to thrift.

Malice is a substitute for wit.

Socrates knew far less than Bayle: there are few branches of knowledge that are useful.

We discover in ourselves what others hide from us, and we recognize in others what we hide from ourselves.

Reason and feeling alternately advise and replace each other. Whoever asks counsel of one of them only, and neglects the other, weakens himself and frustrates by his imprudence the wise precautions of Nature.

They who despise mankind believe themselves great men.

If it is true that vice can never be done away with, the science of government consists in making it contribute to the public good.

Those who let us buy their integrity usually sell us nothing but their honour.

A middling sort of mind may be known by its giving none but faint praise.

If we take the trouble to work out an idea which looked like a deep discovery when it occurred to us, we often find it a hackneyed truth.

However tenderly we love our friends or kindred, the happiness of others is never sufficient to secure our own.

There would be no false opinions but would die without help if once they were set down clearly.

He who can endure all things may venture all things.

There are many things we despise in order that we may not have to despise ourselves.

Old men give good counsels to console themselves for being no longer able to give bad examples.

We have no right to make miserable those whom we cannot make good.

All great thoughts come from the heart.[1]

But what is the use of selections when one is quoting Vauvenargues, or La Bruyère, or La Rochefoucauld, or even the wistful Amiel? One never wants to stop.

[1] This saying was a favourite with Auguste Comte, who himself said: 'The intellect should always be the servant of the heart, never its slave.'

A JOURNEY ROUND A ROOM

ANOTHER French soldier—an author of great popularity in his day—which was later than that of Vauvenargues, was Xavier de Maistre, whose *Voyage autour de ma Chambre* was one of my favourite books when I, too, was of conscript age. It was brought again to my mind the other evening when I found myself suddenly abandoned, after dinner, by my host and hostess in a country house. Would I make myself comfortable, they asked with the utmost solicitude, for two hours? It was absolutely necessary for them both to attend a concert—in fact, to be on the platform—and they knew I should be happier here than there. So also would they, but parish duty, don't you know. They would be away for two hours only. And off they went.

For awhile I sat by the fire. Then I thought of Xavier de Maistre, and began a tour of the room. Xavier de Maistre, I might explain, was a high-spirited French soldier, born in 1763, who, as a punishment for his share in a forbidden duel

at Turin, when serving with the Piedmontese army, was confined to his lodging for some weeks, and, being bored, filled up the time by writing a description of its contents, with all the digressions —some of them not ungallant—to which they gave rise. That was in 1793, when the author was thirty. Upon the ceding of Savoy to Italy he joined the Russian army, and thenceforward made Russia his home. He lived to be nearly ninety, dying in 1852.

The motive invented by the Frenchman is a very useful one, for there is no room so bare that it can afford no entertainment, no point from which the mind cannot jump off into wider realms. There is almost no room even in an English village in which East and West do not meet. In the present case, the room being in the house of cultured and travelled people, there was, of course, an embarrassment of riches, and particularly was it rich in pictures; and this device of exploring rooms in the manner of Xavier de Maistre, if perhaps more successful for me than it might be for other bored persons, is so because there are few pictures, even the worst, in which I cannot find some beguilement. Here they were not the worst: far from it.

The first to catch my eye and hold it was a little scene of sheep on the Downs, in a yellow haze, by Robert Hills: torn probably from a

sketch-book. It was smaller than an ordinary envelope, yet large enough to convey the atmosphere of a misty early morning, while those who know Sussex would detect wild thyme in the air. Turning to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which was on the shelves of the same room, I found that Robert Hills was born at Islington in 1769, and lived till 1844. His instructor was John Alexander Gresse, a very fat man (so much so that he was nicknamed Jack Grease), who had the young royal princesses and all damsels of fashion as pupils. Gresse's father being a rich Swiss—Gresse Street, off Rathbone Place, was on his property—his son was independent, and painted and taught more for fun than money, while he was so ardent a collector of works of art that the sale of them after his death occupied six days. His own instructors were Cipriani, the Anglo-Italian, and Zuccarelli, the Anglo-Swiss, and his chief line was topography. Perhaps the most interesting thing about him is his precocity, for he won nine premiums for his work before he was twenty-one, and one before he was fourteen. I suspect that the indolence that marked the rest of his easy-going career came in with the adipose tissue. He died at the age of fifty-three.

Such was Jack Grease. His pupil Robert Hills took also to topography, which was the principal occupation of all the early water-colour

practitioners, and, indeed, it was to serve that science that the art was called into existence; but instead of depicting abbeys and churches, cities and country mansions, he concentrated on gentlemen's parks, and became known as the best man to render a herd of deer. He was also ready to insert animals into the landscapes of those of his artist friends who were weak in that direction, and he not only sketched but etched. His best title to fame, however, is his energy in helping to form the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, of which he was secretary for many years.

The next picture was also torn from a sketch-book: a haymaking scene by Peter de Wint. This, too, was no bigger than an ordinary envelope, but here again was a section of authentic England, full of light and movement and a gentle breeze. The sky was just the white paper, yet it was sky. How are these miracles performed? I suppose the county to be Lincolnshire, because it is so flat, and because Peter de Wint was often there, and it is in Lincoln Cathedral that his memorial may be found; but he was born in Staffordshire, in 1784, his father being a doctor of Dutch descent. Peter's first instructor was John Raphael Smith, the engraver, and then he broke away and joined the company at Dr. Monro's, at No. 8, Adelphi Terrace, where Turner and Girtin had been before him. Monro was a

physician on the staff of Bedlam, who, having a passion for water-colour, was always on the look-out for young experimentalists in that medium whom he could help. They came to his rooms, worked for an hour or so at copying or at original drawing, and then had supper and half a crown. Or they would join the doctor at his country home, at Feltham, in Surrey, or at Bushey, in Hertfordshire, and sketch from nature. Considering what the good doctor did for so peculiarly an English accomplishment as water-colour painting, I think it a shame that there is no tablet on his house to tell the world that here the young Girtin, the young Turner, the young de Wint, the young Cotman, and the young Varley were encouraged and made ambitious. De Wint entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1809, and spent the rest of his placid happy life in teaching in London and painting the English countryside with extraordinary fidelity and clarity. He died at 40, Upper Gower Street, and is buried in the Savoy Chapel ground. You may see what manner of head was his by looking at the façade of the Royal Institute of Painters in Piccadilly.

I mentioned Varley as among Dr. Monro's protégés, and I found a view of the Thames Valley from Richmond Hill, by that painter, on the third wall; again very small, and very minutely painted, but having an enormous

mileage and complete serenity. John Varley was much the oddest man of the three, coming far nearer the ordinary conception of an artist—that is to say, an eccentric, careless, generous fellow, liable to go off on any self-indulgent tangent and unresponsive to civic duty. Born in 1778, he scraped together an artistic training until he was able to take pupils and get more commissions for landscapes than he could carry out. He was very strong and active, but this did not prevent him from three times, while sketching, being tossed by a bull. His house was a meeting-place of the wits, and one of his most intimate friends was William Blake. With his pupils, who brought him a large income, he was very popular, but if ever they made too much noise he would rush to their rooms and thrash them impartially all round. His advice helped de Wint with his painting, and he assisted Hills to form the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours.

For forty years he worked fourteen hours a day, which accounts for his amazing productivity; but towards the end his unmethodical ways and indiscriminate generosity led to financial difficulties, so that in one of his later years he had as many as thirty writs served on him. His spirits, however, were not to be dashed; and he made to John Linnell the glorious

remark: 'All these troubles are necessary to me; if it were not for my troubles I should burst with joy.' He was an astrologer as well as an artist, and cast the horoscopes of all who could tell him the hour of their birth. Sir Richard Burton, the Orientalist and traveller, studied this mystery under him. Varley died at 67, Margaret Street, in 1842.

Among the silver in which this room was rich the best piece was a teapot by one of the few women silversmiths, Hester Bateman, whose work, whether in teapots, milk-jugs, or sugar-basins, has a peculiar gentle charm. Our most distinguished painter of still life, Mr. William Nicholson, is devoted to Hester, and you will find her creations lovingly depicted on many of his canvases. I can find out very little about her, except that she flourished at the end of the eighteenth century and took to the craft because her husband became blind. I should like to know more.

After silver, brass. On nails on a panel hung several of those shining clanking ornaments which, as they swing, make the approach of a team of cart-horses so musical and cheerful, and which the zealous waggoner polishes with such pride. Some people collect them, and I saw not long ago a number of them at the Old Bell at Hurley—an inn which always brings to my mind the reply

of an Italian waiter there when I asked him how he liked our English Thames, which flows a few steps away. He could not say, he said, because he had not yet walked so far! Perhaps the best way in which I can explain this particular harness ornament is to quote a passage from a letter which I received a little time since. 'Old G. was buried to-day, another link gone. They took him in his own waggon and favourite horses. He always wanted to be taken with Vi'let and Rebel, but they both died before he did, so it had to be Jule, Vi'let's daughter, a gay young filly of fifteen or sixteen summers. His own daughters have nursed him for four years, and haven't really had a night's unbroken rest all that time. Just imagine it, and I get so grumpy if I have one bad night!' Old G. was a Sussex farmer whom I first knew forty-four years ago, and he struck me as an oldish man then, with his coarse yellow bushy beard and his blue eyes and a slow and not unsuspicious—at any rate, very cautious—manner of speech. His boots were always caked with clay from his heavy wealden land, out of which he himself seemed to have grown quite as much as his wheat or mangolds.

On the mantelpiece I found little odds and ends from all over the world, including a polished ammonite of shining iron which my host had himself chipped out of a Dorset cliff with his

geological hammer. Nine hundred millions of years ago this solid mass of metal had been a shell-fish, more or less like those odd marine delicacies which you see outside Prunier's, in Paris. And Bishop Ussher's estimate of the date of the Creation—4004 B.C.—is still solemnly followed by printers of the Bible! Near this transformed mollusc, with its beautiful convolutions tapering to a central point without a flaw in the form or rhythm, was a blue figurine from an Egyptian tomb—the tomb, my host had told me, of an Admiral, with a record of his career inscribed on the back. Here, perhaps, Bishop Ussher's date might not be so misleading.

Next the sea-dog of the Pharaohs was a little Vernis-Martin box with Cupids painted outside in the manner of Fragonard and the inside of tortoiseshell, which made me wonder again why this exquisite craft is no longer cultivated. It is true that the Martins all are dead; but why is there no successor? Four brothers, I find, gave their name to this speciality—Guillaume, Simon, Julien, and Robert, the sons of a Paris tailor, and themselves coach-painters. While working at that task—in the first half of the eighteenth century—they hit upon a more refined and delicate varnish, suitable for tiny objects, such as needle-cases, snuff-boxes, as well as card-tables and royal candles, on whose lucid and gentle surface could

be painted designs. Vernis-Martin approximates to Chinese and Japanese lacquer, and yet is different. The Martin brothers (like our own Adam brothers) had perfect taste and immense industry, and their factories produced innumerable beautiful things.

Over the mantelpiece was no picture, but one of those circular convex diminishing mirrors in which everything is reflected with an increase of brilliance—such as painters who are also great virtuosi love to introduce into their pictures. The earliest example is, I suppose, the Arnolfini portrait group at the National Gallery, by Jan Van Eyck. Then came the miraculous Dutchmen. In our own day Sir William Orpen has had much fun with it. I remember a masterly picture of his father and mother where, in one of these mirrors, you discern their dutiful son busy at his easel. If you would see yourself as it is possible others see you (but it is most earnestly to be hoped not), you must stand very close to the glass. Which brings to my mind the piteous confession of a beautiful woman with whom I was recently talking.

'The tragedy of my life', she said, 'is that I have never seen my face, and never will be able to see it. What use is the testimony of quicksilver? I want to see it for myself.'

'Don't worry,' I replied; 'it's all right.'

'I know, I know!' she said. 'But that doesn't satisfy me. I want to see exactly what you—what all of you—see; and I never shall.'

'Such a deprivation has never worried me,' I said.

'No,' she replied. 'Why should it?'

Passing over a gateway in Dunquerque attributed to Bonington, but more likely to belong to that painter when he is spelt with two Ns, I found myself before a pen-and-ink drawing of two horses drinking at a pool in a forest, with a boy riding one of them. It was signed Charles Jacque, and was the work of a Barbizon pastoral painter chiefly known by his scenes of sheep. Looking at it, I thought myself again in the little French village, as I had seen it last, on a hot September day, with its white walls and red virginia creeper, and, in place of the old artists of the palette, chefs de cuisine. Even the house where R.L.S. lodged in the mid eighteen-seventies, gathering impressions for his French essays and falling in love with Mrs. Osbourne, is now 'The Robert Louis Stevenson Restaurant', and as such is crowded on Sundays by English and American visitors. Rousseau's studio has become a museum. I cannot say whether or no Barbizon boasts a notable artist to-day, but it has periodical exhibitions of new pictures, none of them very dear, although neither

so cheap nor so advanced as those which the painters themselves display on easels from time to time on the pavements of Paris. The habit has not yet been followed here, although one day in the summer of 1927 I saw a youth in the Strand endeavouring to sell copies of his poems.

The next picture was a tiny pencil drawing of cottages at sunset by a famous open-air painter who sojourned at Barbizon, and was influenced by its greatest master, Millet, but worked in his own country, Holland. I refer to the wistful, tender Mauve, whose scenes of sheep are even better known than those of Charles Jacque, and whose cool tones of green and melancholy grey remain his own secret. Anton Mauve was intended by his father to follow him in the Baptist ministry, but he preferred to paint and ultimately had his way. He was born at Zaandam, a busy town just north of Amsterdam, flat and windy, where the water sparkles, the mills turn, the barges cluster, and the houses are gay with a bright and assertive verdancy; he chose for his home Laren, an inland village, where there are dark trees and silent meadows, and where he might brood in peace. Mauve died at the age of fifty in 1888. The Tate Gallery, I think, has but one of his pictures, and there is one at Glasgow; a poor record for a country that is so fond of landscape.

Just under the Mauve drawing was an occasional table from which I picked up an ash-tray with a lovely sheeny blue that changes as the light strikes it at different angles. The effect comes from the wings of butterflies spread out beneath its glass top, and as I looked at it my thoughts carried me in a flash to the shop in the tropical city where I first saw them displayed, and I saw again that terrestrial paradise and felt its heat. By day it is gay enough, with its sparkling water, its arriving and departing vessels, its myriad bathers reclining upon the buoyancy of old tyre tubes, its fantastic villas, its aromatic suburbs with Atlantic rollers breaking green and white on the sands, its lovely flowering trees. But at night it is more remarkable still, with countless electric bulbs running for miles, not only along the waterside, but crowding up the slopes and climbing to the top of the sentinel Sugar Loaf. How odd, I used to think, not to illuminate the great iron crucifix on the point of Corcavado.

All this is thousands of miles away—a long journey for a guest waiting for a host or hostess. But it shows what the home-traveller can do.

A NEW TEMPTATION

A NEW variety of temptation is, as we grow older, unusual; but recently I was the target at which one was directed, and, but for a rare and salutary rush of common-sense to the head, it might have taken effect.

As, after lunching swiftly and frugally in the grill-room of a London hotel, I was waiting to redeem my hat and coat from one of the B.G.S. brigade (B.G.S. standing for bang goes saxpence) I observed on the wall a poster stating that in one of the hotel public rooms Messrs. Blank's Spring Yacht Sale would be held. Looking more closely, I found that the day of the sale was the very day in which I was then living. Looking more closely still, I found that the time of the sale was 2.30; and when I add that my watch revealed the fact that it was now 2.25; that the room was at the end of the identical passage in which I was standing; that there was no pressing reason for leaving so soon; that I still had half a cigar to finish and through the open door could see a blue cloud of smoke proceeding from the

lips of the waiting company; and, lastly, that one of the items was an auxiliary-motor Dutch Botter boat of sixty-nine tons—when you have all these circumstances before you, you will understand how clearly I heard Pope's demon whisper, 'Visto, have a yacht'.

My first feeling on entering the room was one of surprise, for there was nothing to give a stranger to this kind of hotel sale the slightest hint as to its maritime character. The men seated in the chairs had no savour of salt about them; they were not tanned; their eyes were not blue and level in gaze; they hitched no trousers and lapsed into no hornpipe steps. They might have been expecting anything to be put up, from an original MS. of *Alice in Wonderland* to a chest of drawers. In short, they were, I supposed, merely representatives of the real thing, preparing to bid on commission. I was confirmed in this belief by the impact upon them of my own arrival, for obviously, not being of the brotherhood, I might prove dangerous: unfamiliar faces, I have often observed, arouse something more than curiosity among *habitués* of sales. The auctioneer, outwardly as confirmed a landlubber as any of us, also gave me a swift appraising glance with his trained eye, wondering, and possibly instantly deciding, which lot I had come for and exactly how far I could go for it.

Meanwhile I was settling down to the study of the catalogue while the demon went on buzzing in my ear, 'Visto, have a yacht'. There were a dozen to choose from, ranging from a twin-screw auxiliary-motor four-masted schooner of 997 tons to a 'strong and weatherly motor cruiser' of 17; but the one which held my attention was the Dutch Botter yacht of 69 tons, of which there was a photograph and a plan. Everything in both looked perfect. The photograph depicted her on a sea of glass—which is what I should prefer, hospitable and friendly. The plan supported the impression of every comfort—a large saloon, with the padding of the seats clearly suggested; owner's cabin (exciting phrase!) with stove; ladies' cabin (not so important); state room, the crew's quarters (forrard, with three berths), the cockpit (aft, with motor under), the kitchen and pantry. And wherever there was an odd space, a cupboard. Nothing more alluring could be imagined, while telephones and electric light gave an extra note of luxury. When I came to read the auctioneer's description, written with the persuasive eloquence of his class, using all the right words, I saw myself, through the cigar smoke, a commanding figure in white ducks, white shoes with indiarubber soles, a reefer jacket and peaked cap, pacing the deck with firm proprietary tread, the picture of care-free health. 'On account

of the extraordinary roominess of her accommodation,' the auctioneer had written, 'she offers an excellent opportunity to those wishing to make a home afloat.' A home afloat—or, in other words, a means of escape, a refuge from the postman; could anything be more desirable?

Meanwhile, as I was dimly conscious (dimly, because I was so much under the spell of The Promised Sea), the other lots were being dealt with: the four-master schooner of 997 tons, just returned from a two-and-a-half years' Pacific cruise, 'during which she gave every satisfaction in worst ocean weather'; the 'handsome oil-burning steam yacht' of 317 tons, on which £22,000 had been spent in 1925; the 'magnificent sea-going twin-screw auxiliary-motor top-sail schooner' of 206 tons, 'one of the finest hard-weather boats ever built'; the 'commodious and capable cruising ketch' of 77 tons. All these were in turn put up, eulogized by the auctioneer, and with one exception, withdrawn, because no one wanted them; and then the way was cleared for the Dutch Botter and the increased beating of my heart.

Never was a mind in such a turmoil as mine. All through the auctioneer's commendations the pros and cons were in rivalry; pro, a home afloat; con, a crafty idle skipper; pro, a life on the ocean

deep; con, eating her head off in winter; pro, the flying foam; con, harbour dues always mounting up; pro, absolute freedom; con, the price of petrol; pro, no letters; con, the distance from London to Southampton; pro, placid Dutch waterways; con, my total ignorance of the sea; pro, sun-bronze and fitness; con, tinned milk. So would the fors and againsts contend, prudence meanwhile urging the irreconcilability of quill-driving and yacht-owning. 'And another thing,' said prudence, 'why are all these owners giving their yachts up? Why did the owner of this Dutch Botter sour on it? And why,' she added, bringing me back to the actual facts of life with a jerk, 'why is no one bidding now?' For it was true: no one was bidding. The auctioneer coaxed and wheedled, but not a penny was offered, and therefore I, a novice, had no lead to follow, no standard. He wheedled and coaxed, but to no purpose; not a bid. I did not dare to raise my eyes for fear he should translate that action into guineas.

Had I then had the opportunity of reading 'The Story of My Yacht,' that most diverting and inflammatory description, by the great Dumas, of his dallyings with the ocean, I am sure I should have fallen. But those reminiscences had not then seen the light.

And so Visto has no yacht, nor has he

also the faintest idea as to what the vessel would cost. Would five hundred have bought it? Or five thousand? He will never know.

THE IDLERS

HAVING had for most of my life too much to do, it is natural if among the people I envy most are those with too little. But that is not really the case, for long ago I discovered that part of the secret of such happiness as one can expect lies in this very overplus. And, furthermore, many years have passed since I envied any one; not because I look upon my own state as perfection, but because I am now old enough to know so well two things: one, that we must be ourselves, and the other that, even with millionaires, even with men of the soundest digestion and the most distinguished appearance, there is always a catch somewhere.

None the less, were I to relax and permit the wish to be somebody else to have any play, I feel sure that it would run in the direction of sloth. 'Sloth with irresponsibility'—what a marvellous slogan, as we now say! Were Dick Bultitude's garuda stone in my hand at this moment, and I weakened sufficiently, I am sure I should wish to be a tramp. No toilet to worry

about, no hours to keep, no letters to write, no telephone to answer, no bills, no rent and no taxes. Sloth with irresponsibility!

That, however, is perhaps going too far. The life of a tramp cannot be all fun, or his clothes would not be so torn. The rain falls, the wind blows, dogs bite, policemen are hard-hearted. Also I should miss London. Why not, then, become for a while a street-loafer? I could still be shabby; still be free of liabilities; I could eat the best food of all, which is the food you see them cooking in the windows (there is a glorious place of this kind in that country-town street in the midst of London running from St. Martin's Lane to King Street, Covent Garden); I could participate in all the peepshows of the great city, which now I must quickly pass. At last I should have time to watch things—and what could be more delightful than that? The youths and men and messenger-boys on urgent errands who press against the railings of the barracks in Birdcage Walk watching the drilling: I could join them. The youths and men and messenger-boys on urgent errands who assemble wherever another variety of drilling is in progress, regardless of the fact that the operation is accompanied by the most shattering din ever heard outside a boiler factory or a flying ground: I could join them. I might even fall into step behind a band; but I think

not. To stand still and watch; that is the desired end.

During the season and Their Majesties' Courts I should be peculiarly happy, for I could make one in the crowd in the Mall and stand and watch, from five o'clock, when the first carful of fashion arrives, till nine or ten, when the last of them enters the Palace gates. What a bliss this must be you can gather from the eagerness with which the gapers examine every vehicle in which the débutantes and their introducers sit: the cocked-hatted generals in scarlet, the cocked-hatted admirals in blue, the mothers in satin and the daughters in silk. Hour after hour these favoured ones must sit there (the price of social glory), on exhibition to those who loaf. Grand though they are, rich though they are, it is not they that I am envying; it is the crowd. In my own character I might be a little sensitive about all this—sensitive both for myself and for the débutantes—and hurry through the Mall averting my gaze; but as the street-loafer how I should enjoy it!

The street-loafer and the crowd-gaper, who are not quite the same, are curious problems. To me, seeing them with my own eyes and not a tramp's, they prompt the questions: How can they find the time? What is happening in their homes? Who is cooking? Take, for a daily

example, the people who watch the changing of the guard, or hang about the gates of Buckingham Palace hour after hour in the hope of catching a glimpse of the King or Queen or whatever Person of Quality or Eminence dashes past in a closed carriage; where do they really belong? Have they no occupations?

And another question: when it comes to the smart weddings, the opening of buildings, the laying of stones, a highly-spiced case at the Law Courts or the Old Bailey—and even more when it comes to the private visits of Royalty to a flower show or a theatre—how do the gapers know? Who tells them? I am myself a rather careful student of the newspapers, and yet it is always a surprise and even a shock when I find cordons of police across the road, sending the traffic round by devious routes, because this or that public ceremony is shortly due or actually in progress. Nor are chauffeurs too alert in acquiring such information in advance. Yet thousands of women in the suburbs knew all about it and are already massed along the kerb in expectation. Sir Walter Lawrence, in his fascinating book, *The India we Serve*, has something to say about the mysterious way in which the news is spread in mountainous districts far from both the Press and the electric wire; but I think that the omniscience of the London idler is hardly less remarkable.

The spectacle of the people who sit all day outside theatres—sometimes from dawn—waiting for the pit and gallery doors to open on a Starry first night is so frequent as to have become a London commonplace; and yet I never fail to marvel at these persistent patient creatures, never fail to be again perplexed by their odd economic position. Were they in comparative poverty one could understand it, but they most conspicuously are not. They are well-dressed and prosperous looking, able to hire campstools and pay for substitutes when they go away for a meal. That is to say, they obviously have the wherewithal for a booked seat and are sufficiently in bondage to grease-paint to be aware, weeks ahead, of the date of the desired première. Yet rather than book that seat they will endure exposure and discomfort hour after hour, on a London pavement, often in rain and at times under frost. The reason must be either a deplorable and bewildering preference for the dubious joys of the gallery or pit, or an ingrained love of idleness, an unconquerable preference for street-loafing. Ten shillings, or even less, expended in time, would have secured them a good numbered place, for which they could arrive five minutes before the curtain rose after a day spent in some unselfish or even money-making activity. But no; they choose to sit here. And again one asks oneself: What ought

they to be doing? What are they neglecting? Who is looking after their homes?

If, however, it is true, as Milton says, that 'They also serve who only stand and wait', these are Sons and Daughters of the Empire too, and must not be underrated.

LITTLE ARTHUR; OR, THE MAGIC TAXI

I WANT to describe a film which was on private exhibition a few days ago, intended by its producer not necessarily to take the place of the Christmas pantomimes, for that would be an injustice to the stage, but to supplement them.

The scene is in one of the London Squares, I should guess in Bloomsbury—Russell or Bedford. It is late afternoon in winter, and the door of a house opens and two children, Bobby and Betty, appear on the steps, wrapped up for a party, with their mother to see them off; and, standing there, they hail a taxi. The taxi, the driver of which is strangely muffled, comes up, and their mother, being a good mother, takes the opportunity to rub in a reprimand. 'Of course,' she says, 'after the way you've been neglecting your history lesson, you oughtn't to go at all; but this time you may'; and then she kisses them, and gives a final tug and pat to their scarves, and tells them to be good and to leave at the very moment

they are called; and into the taxi they bundle, Betty telling the cabman the address—'100, Kensington Gore.'

But—and this is the very essence of the story—when the taxi starts, instead of going forward it goes backward. 'Hi!' the children cry, pushing their heads out of the window. 'You're going the wrong way! Hi! stop! We want to go to Kensington!' But the strange muffled-up cabman is inexorable; back and back he goes, faster and faster, driving with extraordinary skill, and gradually you notice that the character of the houses is changing, and what were nineteenth-century become eighteenth, and eighteenth become seventeenth, and then Tudor and medieval; and with the changing architecture you see also changing costumes and new kinds of people and new kinds of vehicles: in short, the taxi is backing into Time. 'Look!' says Betty, 'that's a Sedan chair!' 'Look!' says Bobby, 'I'm sure that's a highwayman on that horse. He's got a mask and pistols. Don't let him see us.' 'Look!' says Betty, 'there's a jester; I can tell by his cap and bells. I wish we could stop and hear his jokes.' 'Look!' says Bobby, 'there's a man in the stocks.' 'Look!' says Betty, 'isn't that a poor witch they're ducking? How dreadful!'

At last the taxi stops and the cabman, after descending and opening the door, removes his

disguise and is discovered to be a small grave boy who introduces himself as Little Arthur, the hero of the famous book from which we used to learn our history and which may still be read in schools and classes. 'I am sorry', he says, 'to have brought you so far out of your way, but I think I can show you some things quite as entertaining as your party, and get you to take a little more interest in your lessons too.' He then asks Betty what event in English history she would best like to see, and she says Alfred and the Cakes; and straightway the scene changes to the famous cottage at Athelney, with the King craving shelter from the curmudgeonly housewife and being set to watch the oven, and falling asleep, and then being abused by the woman—'You oaf, you lubber, you lazy loon!'

Meanwhile the children make their comments, not in measured speech, very difficult to follow, as in the wheezy Talkies, but in the old familiar way by means of captions; and then Little Arthur asks Bobby what he would like to see best, and he says the landing of William the Conqueror, and so they get back into the taxi, which now moves forward, as a taxi should, and in course of time it reaches the sands of Sussex, and you see the Norman ship approaching, and then a rowing-boat putting out with the Duke in it, and as he jumps ashore he trips on the gunwale and falls,

rising with his hands full of grit; whereupon one of his companions says, 'You have grasped the land already, my liege: a good omen!'

I cannot remember all the well-known incidents that the children asked for and were shown; but I know that the signing of Magna Charta was one, and the drowning of the Duke of Clarence in a butt of Malmsey another (this was Bobby's choice); and Betty, shuddering a little, but firm, desired to see the smothering of the Little Princes in the Tower; and Bobby wanted a tournament and got it, with some very charming old English tunes and dances between the jousts. And we saw Guy Fawkes surprised in the cellars of the House of Commons, and King Charles the Second hiding in an oak tree, and Nelson's last moments on the *Victory*. I should have marvelled at the expense of the production if we were not so accustomed to hearing of the millions of pounds which are always at the service of the cinema.

Finally, the taxi again stops, and the driver, getting down to open the door, is revealed as a real London cabman, saying, 'Here you are, Missy, here's 100, Kensington Gore; I don't think you're late!' And the children rub their eyes in bewilderment. 'But I thought you were Little Arthur,' says Betty. 'No,' says the cabby, 'I'm Fat Harry.' 'But where is Little Arthur?'

Bobby asks. 'Sorry I can't oblige,' says the cabby. 'Anyway, pop out and pop in and enjoy yourselves.'

The whole thing, you see, was magic; in a few minutes, as in a dream, the children had seen all that pageantry of history. Being, however, sensible creatures, they pay the fare, go into the house, which is full of other children, and the film fades away on a scene of jollity, with Roger de Coverley in the foreground and through distant doors a glimpse of a lighted Christmas tree.

Where did I see this new picture? Well, as a matter of fact I didn't see it at all; I have invented it. But wouldn't it be rather a nice addition to the old silent soothing Movies?

PARENTS' BROTHERS

I AM more and more convinced that if a philosopher wished to write a history of human eccentricity or whimsicality he could not do better than confine his investigations to uncles. Fathers, mothers, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, cousins, even brothers and sisters, can be strange; but uncles are strangest. If you ask a man if he has any unusual relations, and he at once (as he will) begins to chuckle, you may be certain he is thinking of an uncle, even two uncles, even three. Probe him, and you will find that you were right.

Every uncle has, of course, to be first a brother, but as brothers they do not stand out so remarkably. To their own generation they may be tiresome or even deplorable, but that is all; their nodosities and grotesqueries are fully visible only to the next, to us, their nephews and nieces. None the less, our minds are often prepared to consider them as quaint creatures—the oddness of uncles is often instilled in us before we have begun to observe it for ourselves—by those very

brothers and sisters to whom the full pageant is not displayed. At a very early age we hear our parents discussing them. A letter is opened at the breakfast table. 'Good heavens! what do you think Hubert has done now?' Or 'I wish Gregory wouldn't be so utterly mad.' Or 'Poor Grace! Arthur's gone off to China again, this time to be a missionary! Why, the man's a heathen.' Here is food for reflection indeed: Uncle Hubert performing some unknown and exciting deed; Uncle Gregory not sane; Uncle Arthur a savage with feathers and a bow and arrow! We had not thought of them quite like that, but henceforward we shall have quite new ideas.

I would go so far as to maintain that it is impossible to find people without odd uncles. When comparing uncles at a dinner-party the other evening, some astonishing examples were revealed. One of the company had an uncle who never got up. Although perfectly well, for twenty years he stayed in bed. And then one morning, without giving any notice of his intention, he appeared at the breakfast table and was never abnormal again. Being peculiar about getting up seems to be an avuncular trait. I remember a novelist friend of mine, who was never so amusing as when describing odd people, telling me about an uncle of his whose speciality

was turning night into day. When all the world was out and about he was asleep. Directly all the world went to bed he became lively. This was not from necessity, but choice. Whether he had been crossed in love I cannot say, but a blighted heart is only too often the cause that is hinted at when the freakishness of uncles is under discussion. This, perhaps, is one of the reasons why the most freakish of all are usually bachelors, the leavening and levelling influence of a matter-of-fact woman never having been at work.

But they can be married, too; even if their full quality does not emerge until they are widowers. There was, for instance, the uncle of another member of the company who had been married, and was the father of two daughters. But after the death of his wife he shut himself up in the turret of his house, which was at Streatham, when Streatham was more or less in the country, and confined himself to it for ever, as a hermit. He never saw his daughters again, nor did they see him, although they were all within the same walls. His meals were carried to his doormat, and there deposited. Having eaten them he retained the utensils; so that new ones had continually to be bought. At his death thousands of plates and dishes were recovered.

Even though it is no hindrance to oddity in an uncle to be married, as a father he is probably

less susceptible to criticism and laughter. It is not his own children, but his brother's or sister's children, who will get the real fun out of him. Fathers are tragic figures; uncles comic. Yet uncles are to the young naturally so fascinating a study not a little because they are our parents' kith and kin. There is the interest of comparing brother and brother, or brother and sister, to detect dissimilarities and resemblances. There is the interest of finding some one whose attitude to a rather terrifying progenitor exhibits no fear whatever and, indeed, often becomes so familiar that the little spectators tremble. There is the problem of how to get on to terms with this boisterous or this serious man—for all uncles are one or the other—how to parry facetiousness or avoid a too sympathetic desire to be friendly.

Meanwhile, sitting round the table, we continued to call uncles from the deep, including still another who would not get up. For months he kept his bed, living entirely on biscuits and a shrewish form of yellow condiment called piccalilli, which he ate from a soup-plate. Then one day he would rise, order his carriage, and, in his dressing-gown, drive forth. At every pastry-cook's he would stop the brougham, rush in, bite a piece out of half a dozen tarts made of different jams, and dash back; leaving to the footman the task of explaining and paying for the damage

done. Here perhaps a hint of something more than eccentricity might be suspected, but no one can so adroitly balance on the rail dividing sanity from insanity as uncles. Another uncle had his hair curled by a barber every morning of his life. Another uncle had been murdered by a tramp. But that is nothing: this is not an inquiry into the rights and wrongs of tramps.

Christmas is to a large extent the uncles' festival. We are in the habit of saying that it is the children's; but the success or failure of the anniversary is often a matter for uncles to decide. It is their principal chance in the year to show what they are made of. Let them speak now or forever hold their peace, and let them say it with gifts. It is also at Christmas that the visibility of uncles becomes as nearly perfect as may be. For the other 364 days they are largely a matter of hearsay. Rumours of their peculiarities reach us, but no more. It is on Christmas Day that their countenances, homely, gothic, provocative of mirth, are again actually before us.

ENGLISH DISCOVERIES

I. MALMESBURY

THE exploration of England is inexhaustible; and were they not stung by Mr. Kipling's famous question, the wise would never go abroad. But, terrified of the poet's contempt, we are always crossing the Channel. How much better to forswear for ever more that uncomfortable journey, with its petty exactions (there is still a humiliating passport queue on both sides), and visit, for instance, Malmesbury! I say Malmesbury because I have just discovered it and am still in a glow.

Malmesbury's chief title to fame is its Abbey; or rather what remains of it, for too much has perished. The restoration, probably still in progress, seems to me to be particularly sensible, for it aims only at making a section of the main aisle compact and complete. To effect this a solid wall has been built across it in the east, and the altar brought forward. The stone work is of the noblest, but if you find it too severe, look at the tender grace of Burne Jones's figures,

in one of the south windows, of Faith, Courage, and Devotion. The old Norman porch, dark and cavernous, seen across the graveyard from the gate by the market cross, has superb dignity.

The Abbey grew from a little seventh-century monastery built by Maidulph, a monk of such learning that Aldhelm (afterwards St. Aldhelm) was placed in his charge. Aldhelm was the first abbot of Malmesbury, and the first bishop of Sherborne, and the first Anglo-Saxon to write in Latin. Not only could he preach, but he could sing and play, and the story goes that being distressed by the poor attendance at the Abbey, he placed himself in the guise of a minstrel on the bridge over the Avon at the foot of the town, and by his secular performance, having gathered a crowd of admiring listeners, suddenly disclosed the uncloven foot and wooed them to spiritual things, leading them eventually, like another Pied Piper, up the hill to service. Once, when he was on a visit to Rome, he took off his vestment before saying Mass, but could see no peg for it, so he hung it on an adjacent sunbeam. That is the way! A real Saint!

So holy was St. Aldhelm that at night he used to recite his psalter immersed up to his shoulders in a pond; but since there is no pond near the Abbey this incident must have occurred at Doulting, where he died.

At Doulting is still to be seen the spring in the Vicarage garden, where in the depths of winter the Saint would stand; and to this day pilgrims visit it with small bottles in which to carry away some of the precious water. From this spring flows the little river that is known in Wiltshire as 'The Stream'. After Aldhelm's death the monks of Doulting, such was their love, moved to Malmesbury in a body, in order to be near his tomb and thus near to him.

The next great Malmesbury name is that of Athelstan, King of the English, who died in 939 and was buried in the Abbey. You may see his tomb, which after many years has just been moved from the south aisle to the north. It is possible that the stone coffin beside the porch was the King's: the body long since vanished. Athelstan was a wise and powerful ruler, and five of his sisters married continental princes, one of whom was afterwards the Emperor Otto. Otto's father, King of the East Franks, having craved the lady's hand for his son, Athelstan was so obliging as to send another sister as well, so that the youth might have a choice. The selection made, Otto passed the other on to a German princeling. Athelstan gave to the monastery the bones of Samson, the Welsh Saint, who flourished in the sixth century and lived a life of great holiness both in the West Countree and in Brittany;

but no traces of him did I find, nor of Athelstan's other gifts: a piece of the True Cross and a thorn from the Crown.

We come next to Bishop Roger of Salisbury, who built Malmesbury Castle; and then to William of Malmesbury, the author of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, who flourished in the first half of the twelfth century and acted as the Abbey's librarian, and with his primitive historian's pen told us practically all we know of King Stephen.

So much for Malmesbury's Men of God. On the secular side the town gave the world Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher, born there in 1588: a premature birth, owing to his mother's excitement on hearing about the Spanish Armada. His father, a choleric man, was Vicar of Westport, now incorporated in Malmesbury, who had to surrender his living after a bodily attack on one of his parishioners, leaving his family to the care of his brother, a glover. Thomas Hobbes was educated at Malmesbury and Oxford and never seems to have returned to his home town. For many years he preferred pleasure to study, and was the companion, on his travels, of the heir to the Duke of Devonshire, but his thoughts were sobered, when he was forty, by a wrestling match with Euclid's forty-seventh proposition, Book I. 'By God,' he first said, 'this is impossible'; and

then, persisting, emerged from the struggle a convinced geometrician. His great work, *Leviathan*, appeared in 1651. He died in 1679.

I was taken over the little room above the church porch—called oddly the parvis—by the verger, a gentle and informative enthusiast, as all vergers should be. In a glass case are a few curiosities, such as a Breeches Bible, two collecting boxes, a silver penny struck at Malmesbury mint when Edward the Confessor was King, and an hour-glass for the preacher. How eagerly must young eyes have watched it! Older eyes, however, may have viewed it quite differently, for long sermons can be much to the public taste. I find, for instance, this entry in a seventeenth-century diary: 'I was present at Westminster Abbey when Dr. Burnett had preached out an hour-glass, and then turned it over for another hour, upon which the audience did set up a shout for joy.' A tablet on the wall of the room states that the panelling surrounding it was the gift, a few years ago, of Baldomero de Bertodano, who, the verger told me, was a resident of Malmesbury, now with God. What a magnificent name! On the walls are two views of the Abbey on its hill taken from the same spot: one after T. Hearne, a father of water-colour, and one after J. M. W. Turner, its most illustrious son. There is also a picture the sight of which must make

every local cleric wince, and every patriotic verger avert his eyes, for it represents the Abbey's ciborium, which after being stolen (and not being absolutely identifiable) was sold at Christie's in 1908 for £6,000. But the special pride of this upper chamber is the great illuminated Bible in four volumes, done for the Convent of the Carthusians and formally handed over in 1407. At that time the library was famous; with the Dissolution, a century and more later, it perished.

In the churchyard is one of the oddest epitaphs I can remember to have seen. It records an accident which occurred two centuries and more ago, when a travelling menagerie was on view in the grounds of the White Lion Inn, and a tiger not only broke loose, but broke his fast on the first attractive morsel that he could see. This chanced to be an unfortunate girl named Hannah Twiny or Twinnoy. Thus did the stone-mason commemorate her fate:

In bloom of Life
She's snatched from hence.
She had not room
To make defence.
For Tyger fierce
Took Life away.
And here she lies
In a bed of clay,
Until the Resurrection Day.

Adjoining Malmesbury's churchyard is a spacious grey building which you would take for the home of Malmesbury's richest burgess, did you not chance to catch sight of a golden bell over the principal door, indicating the presence of an inn. Never did a noble hostelry disclose its secret with more reluctance. But although the external lure is almost invisible, once you are beneath the Bell's roof the welcome is cordial, and you will be tempted, amid pictures of the Badminton hunt, to eat and drink too much. Having done so, there is a series of enclosed lawns to stroll upon. Once a guest house of the abbey, the Bell is maintaining tradition.

The distinction and reserve of this inn are characteristics also of the town. I cannot speak for the silk factory on the outskirts, but the streets through which the stranger passes are clean and quiet, the shop windows are orderly and bright, and the shopkeepers simple and friendly-mannered and pictures of health. The air on this Wiltshire ridge must be very pure. But the people of Malmesbury are not only smiling and well cared for; they are sensible, too. At a certain dangerous corner by the Abbey, a large mirror has been erected so that chauffeurs approaching from either way may not be taken unawares. There's for you!

II. THE NEW FOREST

Motor-cars and charabancs may do their worst to make its roads noisy and even unsafe, but the New Forest as a whole, the New Forest where it is green and purple, remains a sanctuary and is little likely to be much injured. I saw a great deal of it the other day between Cadnam and Beaulieu, following upon a recent visit to Balmer Lawn, and I can vouch for its inviolable seclusion. Parts of it would still be very perilous to be benighted in. Cattle are still frequently bogged.

The diversity and wide extent of the Forest are always a surprise, whether one is among the great trees, or beside the Beaulieu River, or on the heathery heights near the airy house that Auberon Herbert built. Indeed, from those altitudes it would seem to be illimitable. And everywhere there are ponies. I never noticed so many before. Ponies and pony foals: the foals the shyest, gayest, and most engaging little creatures in the world: not more beautiful, of course, than fawns, because nothing could be more beautiful than fawns, but more attractive by reason of that touch of naughtiness which is the pony's birthright.

Although wild deer I did not see, not a glimpse of them, how natural, on returning to the artificial life, to take down *The Children of the New Forest*

and endeavour to recapture some of the delicious flavours of fifty years ago!

Captain Marryat's nursery classic wears, I find, extremely well, and I had forgotten enough for something like excitement now and then to overcome me. I rejoice not to be too old to be thrilled by such a speech as this, by Jacob, the ancient forester, to Edward Beverley, the eldest of the children: 'Now, Edward, do you stay here while I go back to the lee side of the covert; I will enter it with Smoker, and the stag will, in all probability, when he is roused, come out to breast the wind. You will then have a good shot at him; recollect to fire so as to hit him behind the shoulder; if he is moving quick, fire a little before the shoulders; if slow, take aim accurately; but recollect, if I come upon him in the covert I shall kill him if I can, for we want the venison, and then we will go after another to give you a chance.'

With what sound instinct the brave mariner chose the Forest and the vicissitudes of the Royalists as his background! No story for the young can go wrong if behind the scenes there is a romantic generous King in hiding from repellent foes, and a company of young aristocrats who have to earn their living in disguise and are set to such fascinating tasks as shooting deer (often against the law as framed by the repellent

foes), trapping wild cattle, and, for the girls, cooking venison pasties. Even without Royalist and Roundhead this book would still—by virtue of its *Robinson Crusoe* and *Swiss Family Robinson* motif—be assured of success; but with that theme added it was made doubly rich.

The odd thing is that the gallant Captain, whose knowledge of the vernacular was so liberal, allowed himself to be handicapped by making the children talk like books—and not merely books, but stilted books. Listen to Edward, aged fifteen, in conversation with the Intendant. (By the way, I find that the Intendant is not what, for half a century, I have been thinking him. All that time he had been to me a kind of standard of frosty, aloof, rigid superiority. When I have met a hard priggish man I have said to myself that he was like the Intendant. I find now, after revisiting his habitat, that the Intendant was much more human.) Here, however, is Edward, aged fifteen, vocal: 'Sir, it is a base dog that bites the hand that feeds him. Jacob Armitage, and his father before him, were retainers in the family of Colonel Beverley: they were indebted to him for the situation they now hold in the Forest; indebted to him for everything; they revere his name, they uphold the cause for which he fell, as I do.'

It is more than probable that it was from

caution that the author, who could not be bothered with philological research, made Edward talk like that. When he forgot the maxim 'Safety first' he could let Humphrey be sufficiently anachronistic, in 1647, as to remark: 'Anyhow, Alice, if only we had a cow, wouldn't that be jolly?'

But what do these blemishes matter? Nothing. The story's the thing, and nothing interferes with the drama or interest of that narrative until the last page, when Charles the Second, now on the throne again, gives away all three brides to their three soldier husbands, one of them Edward, with the remark: 'Could loyalty be better rewarded?'

I find that *The Children of the New Forest* was the last of Marryat's books to be published in his lifetime. The date is 1847, and he died in 1848. The joyous series of nautical yarns by which he is best known had begun in 1829 with *Frank Mildmay*. He was then in active service, commander of the *Ariadne*. He left the sea in 1830, at the age of thirty-eight, and, emboldened by the popularity of *Frank Mildmay*, took to literature. Those glorious books, *Peter Simple*, *Jacob Faithful*, *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, and *The Pirate and the Three Cutters*, all belong to the early 'thirties. His last period was given to efforts to please younger readers, and then in 1847, after four years of residence as far from his chosen

element as a farm in Norfolk, a sudden and mastering desire to be a sailor again came to him, as later it was to come to a greater writer of the sea, if not so distinguished a captain—to Joseph Conrad in his rural home in Kent. Neither man realized his wish, and Marryat took the refusal so hard as to burst a blood-vessel and die from it.

III. TWO RUINS

On the theme of England's ruins one could write for ever, from the first which, as a child, I saw, and played in—East Mascalls, at Lindfield, in Sussex, a mere domestic desolation—to such renowned vestiges of a storied past as the Abbeys of Rievaulx and Tintern, and the castles of Kenilworth and Corfe. But at the moment I am concerned only with two, a mansion and a fortification, for the reason that it is they which I have most recently seen.

I begin with the mansion, because it is one of the most satisfactory ruins that I know. Houghton Park House, near Ampthill, is a ruin indeed: the husk of a country seat, on which the ivy has set a grip of iron. Out of this sombre green jungle the masonry here and there struggles: on the south side a high but broken tower, on the north three lovely arches, white and red, and on the west the remains of a graceful colonnaded

portico. All around is meadow; the ruin rises from the turf. Never have I seen such domineering ivy, while other trees, seeded, I suppose, by birds or the vagrant breeze, spring from every floor. Nature is winning, but it will be long before her triumph is complete; and I implore those in authority not to let the arches disappear.

It was this façade, the north, which John Bunyan, walking over from not too distant Elstow, would have seen in all its comely splendour, and which, according to tradition, excited in his mind the vision of the House Beautiful. And the hills on which, on the very edge, the House Beautiful stands might, under certain conditions of light, have been his Delectable Mountains. But the prospect as Bunyan would see it, standing here and looking north towards Bedford, is a very different one from that which meets the eye to-day, with all the factory chimneys that have sprung up, and two huge structures, like white mammoths, belonging, I suppose, to the Cardington Works where airships are built. What the simple tinker's eyes would make of these vast factories and of their bewildering products, I cannot say, but something very frightening to sinners, you may be sure.

Houghton Park House, which arose only a few years before Bunyan was born, in 1628, is credited to Inigo Jones, and the columns and

arches of the north front are said to be a replica of a Palladian palazzo in Venice. Its builder and first occupant was the famous Countess of Pembroke, who inspired the noblest epitaph in the language, beginning—

> Underneath this marble hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse,
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother . . .

It is to Wilton, near Salisbury, that one must go for the most intimate associations with this benign and scholarly lady, the friend of poets, including Shakespeare himself, and herself the preserver of her brother's 'Arcadia'; but I like to think of her here, too. After, as a widow, leaving Wilton, she lived chiefly in London, at Crosby Hall, which in those days was in Bishopsgate Street, but has now been set up again at Chelsea, close to the river; but in 1615 James I gave her for her lifetime the royal Manor of Houghton Conquest to do as she liked with; and in 1621 he came here to visit her and inspect the result of her activities. There are no traces of a garden, but the house had more than one loggia on which the Countess could pace or watch the great expanse of meadow and hedgerow fading into blue. Behind the house was the park with many fine trees, and, I assume, its deer. London was a day's journey, changing horses at Harpenden and

St. Albans. But not for long did this rare spirit enjoy her new home, for in 1621 she died: . . .

> Death, ere thou hast slain another
> Wise and fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee!

Another noble lady, the Royalist Christiana Countess of Devonshire, lived here for three years after the battle of Worcester had dashed her party's hopes and once more sent King James's grandson into hiding. But when we touch upon the Civil War the wealth of ruins becomes embarrassing. Not even a large book could hold the descriptions of the strongholds, now crumbling, which are associated with the struggle between Charles the First and his foes.

One which I have often seen from the Bath Road, looking north at Speen, is Donnington Castle, whose massive gateway, all that remains, surmounts a green hill, the steepness of which on, at any rate, three sides—as you come to realize when you climb to the top, as I did the other day—helps to account for the success with which the castle resisted Cromwell's guns and men. It was garrisoned by Charles, in 1643, to guard this same Bath Road, and Colonel John Boys was its Governor. After defying a Parliamentary army of 3,000 men under Middleton, who lost 300 men in the assault, it was bombarded by Colonel Horton from a fort which he built on

the Speen slope, but although it was reduced almost to its present condition of ruin, the defenders still held out and the assailants desisted and dispersed. An assortment of Colonel Horton's cannon balls may be seen in the entrance hall, together with other relics, including three clay pipes, veritable nose-warmers, which the spade has from time to time disclosed. Charles, arriving from Lostwithiel on October 21, 1644, knighted Boys for his doggedness. The second battle of Newbury then was fought (the first had been a year before), after which the King and his army moved on to Oxford. No sooner had he gone than another attempt by the Parliamentarians was made to reduce the castle, but in vain; and on November 4 it was safe enough for Charles to sleep there. The gallant Sir John Boys survived till 1664, and died in his own home.

These are stirring memories to recall as one climbs the winding stairs and looks from the gaps in the fortifications at the surrounding country, once populous with the foe. There are now too many trees for a clear idea of the invasion to be gained, but one realizes, up here, what a fine target it must have been, and how the walls burst into dust and rubble when Horton made a hit. But the castle has pacific as well as martial claim to attention, in having belonged once to Thomas Chaucer, who, being the son of old Dan,

might not inaptly be called the Brother of English Poetry. The younger Chaucer sold it to his son-in-law, Sir Thomas Phelipp, and when Sir Thomas died his widow, née Alice Chaucer, inherited it and became a Lady Bountiful.

Donnington has a feature peculiar to itself in the shape of a galvanized-iron roof which has been erected to keep the rain out of the highest rooms, and which you find when you reach the top. There may be other galvanized-iron roofs in other castles, but there surely is not another so covered with the names of trippers. The temptation to inscribe one's autograph on a historic wall or window, or to cut it in historic stone or wood, is among the most powerful and irresistible of human urges; and never can it have had more licence than here. Not an inch of the roof is blank. Coming away I found another curious thing, and that was, in the vicinity of Donnington, an inn called after the local lion, whose signboard, a painting of the castle, could hardly be more exact. One has become so accustomed to the inaccurate representations put forward by licensed vituallers—think for a moment of the difference between the notepaper or postcard view of the foreign or English hotel that reaches one after writing for terms, and the edifice itself when you get there!—that this verisimilitude came as a kind of shock.

A ROMANTIC DEALER

THE death of Mr. Eustace Lancaster, the picture dealer, seems to have passed without comment, but he was, in his own way, a more remarkable man than many whose obituary notices are lengthy. The neglect may be explained, perhaps, by the fact that for the past few years he had given up active work at his premises in Clifford Street in order to serve as a travelling commissioner for the late Sir Andrew Mivart, the famous collector. In fact, almost all the recent additions to the wonderful Mivart Collection (which the privileged may see in Kensington Palace Gardens, and which, I understand, on his widow's death, will belong to the nation) were bought by Lancaster. I knew him well, and I can testify to the satisfaction which he felt when Sir Andrew appointed him his grand vizier. As a matter of fact, he was in no way suited to be a dealer in the ordinary sense of that word, for he hated the very idea of bargaining, had a soft heart, and having acquired a beautiful thing parted with it only with pangs. How he came

to be a dealer at all was always a mystery; especially as his previous enterprise was bee-farming. But he made a living. He had the additional merit of looking the part and not lounging about like a heavy swell.

I think it would be of interest if I set down, as nearly as I can remember, his own narration of the story of his meeting with Sir Andrew.

'One summer morning' (he said) 'I was told that a woman was in the gallery wanting to sell a picture.

'I left my little room behind the gallery and found a poor creature with a parcel. As she undid the string she told me that her husband was ill, and that they had decided to part with their landscape. They had no notion what it was worth.

'I could see in a flash that it was an exquisite example of the Barbizon school, and when I had carried it to the light there was no doubt it was a Corot—small, but perfect.

' "How did you come to have it?" I asked.

'She said that it had belonged to her husband's father, and they took it over, together with some bits of furniture, when he died. She would be sorry to lose it, it always brought such nice country thoughts into the room. It was a pretty thing, wasn't it?—almost like an oleo, it was so well done.

'"How much do you want for it?" I asked.

'"Would it be worth five pounds?" was her reply, put with the utmost timidity. Five pounds would make all the difference to her husband's condition. She could buy many necessaries with it.

'"Excuse me a minute," I said, and retired to my room. I felt that I must have time to think. The picture might fetch from seven hundred to a thousand pounds at Christie's, but the season was over, and I, in my small way of business, might have to wait some long while—several months—to find a purchaser. It could be sold at once to a bigger dealer for, say, four hundred pounds. If I had been asked three hundred I should have given it—even three hundred and fifty. And here was the poor creature willing to take only a fiver!

'I was trying, you see, to get at a fair price, for there was no question of taking advantage of such ignorance combined with such necessity.

'After being busy for a little while at my desk, I went out into the gallery again.

'"Here are five pounds," I said, counting them into her hand. "But that isn't all I am going to give you. Here also is a cheque for three hundred and forty-five pounds, which you can get cashed at your leisure. The five pounds are for immediate wants."

'She began to thank me.

'"It's a purely business transaction," I said. "And self-protective, too. If I had given you only the five pounds you asked, I shouldn't be able to sleep at night, and that's unbearable."

'She had only just left the place, dazed but radiant, when a tall man with a long, white beard came in.

'"I'd like to look round," he said, and he began a tour of the walls.

'I left him alone, for it is a rule of mine not to tell people how good pictures are—I hate it so when other dealers tell me.

'Coming to a stop before the Corot, which was still on the chair where I had put it, he asked the price.

'I told him I couldn't say. I had only just bought it, and had not had time to consider its future.

'"How much did you give for it?" he asked.

'"My dear Sir . . ." I began. This is not the kind of question that is put, and I was angry.

'"It's all right," he said. "I was only going to offer you a hundred pounds profit, whatever it was. But as a matter of fact I don't need to ask, because I know. I have the money you gave for it, here"; and he pulled from his pocket my little pink slip and the five notes.

'"That picture was mine," he said, "and that woman was my housekeeper. I wanted to test

you. I've always admired your taste, but I didn't know what kind of a man you were. I know now, and I want to make you an offer. Will you become my agent and help me add to my collection? My name is Mivart, Sir Andrew Mivart."

'My heart almost stopped beating; for we all know of Sir Andrew Mivart—the prince of picture collectors, the owner of the Belvedere Rembrandt, the Grand Duke Velasquez, the Roxburgh Gainsborough; and to be asked to associate with him, in a position of such trust, was a terrific testimonial.

' "You are very kind," I said. "And it is a great honour. But . . ."

' "Oh, yes, of course you will want time to think it over. I know that," he replied. "I'll come in again in a day or so, unless you write to me first. But I think I can make it worth your while, and I'm sure you're tired of dealing. Dealing, obviously, isn't your natural calling. You'd have some jolly times abroad, you know, and you would buy exactly as if you were going to hang the pictures on your own walls."

' "That's too much of a compliment," I said.

' "Not at all," he replied; "our tastes coincide. I wish I didn't have to delegate this job; it would be such fun getting ahead of the Americans; but if I'm to go on collecting I must go on

making the money, and that means staying at home."

'"I'll tell you to-morrow," I said. "The fact is, at the moment I'm a little dizzy. It is all too sudden. And I haven't really got over the transaction with your housekeeper. By the way, if she's ever tired of keeping house, there's a great future for her on the stage."

'He laughed.

'"We rehearsed it together," he said.

'"And suppose I had given her the five pounds?" I asked.

'"Oh, she would have withdrawn the picture in double quick time. It depends", he said, "on whether you join me or not. If you join me, the picture is mine and I return your cheque; but if you refuse, why, I'm afraid, in fairness, I must relinquish it to the honest dealer who bought it."'

That is the story, highly creditable both to employer and employed.

I am sorry that I shall not see Lancaster again. He seems to have taken chill in an open car—not a very difficult thing to do—and it struck deep. He was unmarried. Also, perhaps I ought to add, he never existed.

EXALTATION AND ABASEMENT

CHANCE is the only law that governs the evocation of the old familiar faces. At any moment the button may be touched, and by the least likely agency. Looking, for instance, at the report of a sale of works of art I noticed that a water-colour by Birket Foster had fetched nine hundred guineas, and the mere fact brought to my mind two memories. One was a fascimile of a little picture by this artist that hung in the nursery when I was a child, and was a constant joy: two pink-cheeked little rustic girls in sunbonnets by a gate, wild flowers at their feet, poppies in the wheat on the other side of the gate, and away in the distance miles of blue England under a sky of deeper blue not wholly free from the suggestion of thunder. How deft was Birket Foster's hand! To take a piece of paper eight inches by six and by myriad touches with a brush transform it into quintessential Surrey—what a miracle I thought it then and think it still!

And what an interesting example of change of

taste is to be found in those nine hundred guineas! What his work brought him when he was most active, I cannot say, but there was a period in his late life and after his death when his prices were very high. But then came a decline, so that before the War you could get an excellent Birket Foster for a few pounds. Other fashions prevailed and this simple idealist was crowded out. But the War made openings for fortunes to be amassed by a type of man who, when the time came to rest and think about the decoration of his new home, found that such charming English idylls as those painted by Birket Foster were exactly what would make his eyes most happy—and, well, nine hundred guineas!

And my other recollection? Reading that report, I saw again a friend of my childhood and youth, an elderly gentleman with a snow-white beard who was always a welcome visitor at our house; and I remembered how once he told us that he had been on a holiday at Tunbridge Wells, and one day there, sitting on a seat on the Common, had been perplexed and amused when a strange lady had advanced excitedly upon him and asked him if she might shake his hand.

'Certainly, Madam,' he had replied, 'if it will give you any pleasure.'

'Pleasure!' said she; 'more than pleasure. It will always be a matter of boasting with me that

I once was privileged to shake the hand of the most beautiful painter that England possesses—Mr. Birket Foster.'

'You can imagine', he said, when telling the story, 'how set up I was by that. There is no man I would sooner be taken for. But', he added, 'pride goeth before a fall. The very next day I was sitting on the very same seat, when another lady—and this time, no hero-worshipper but a Fury—also marched up to me. "Why didn't you come at eleven o'clock as you promised?" she demanded.

' "Promised?" I said. "I'm sorry, Madam, but I've never seen you before."

'She drew away and gave me a searching look. Then she laughed. " I beg your pardon," she said, "but I thought you were my bath-chair man. Are you quite sure you're not?" '

BIRDS, DOMESTIC AND EXOTIC

I. PIGEONS

MUSIC-HALLS are (of course) not what they used to be—any more than anything else is. So far as I can observe from infrequent visits, the number of available performers has dwindled to such an extent that the changes are being rung on a very few, and novelty, at any rate in London, is rare. But I found recently a most charming new turn in the shape of Hamilton Conrad, a trainer of pigeons.

One thinks normally of the pigeon as not too sagacious a bird. In Trafalgar Square, in St. Paul's Churchyard, at the British Museum and the Guildhall, although he is bold and voracious, he is also frightened far too easily, for he ought to know by now that no Egyptian ibis, no Scandinavian stork, was ever safer. Even in Venice he fails (although this may be his concession to routine) to hear without all the machinery of alarm the sound of the noonday gun, which he and his forbears have been hearing in security for

many, many years; while anybody who falls a victim to the wiles of the gold-brick merchant or other obvious swindler, is given his name. Another pigeon, we say, has been plucked.

Yet the astonishing performances of homers prove what the pigeon can do on the grand scale, and Mr. Conrad's little company shows its willingness to pass under the dominion of the human will, not only with exact docility but, to all appearances, with enjoyment. After having put his troupe through various evolutions on the stage, this gentleman dismisses them—some fifteen or twenty—to the utmost heights of the building, where, through the haze of tobacco smoke, they are lost to view. He then calls them one by one to rejoin him: this one to settle on his right shoulder, this on his left; this one on his right wrist, that on his left; and down from the roof they come, in due order, beautiful fluttering things, to obey. The fifth—whose name I fancy is Swifty—has a more spectacular rôle, and never have I seen anything prettier. Swifty is bidden to take its place on its master's head, but not to fly thither in the ordinary way, but to plane down. And suddenly, in its oblique descent, out of the mist, comes this white visitant as from another world, straight as a dart—straight, I might even say (for the thought actually came into my mind under those odd and alien surroundings) as the

golden line marked out for the dove in Crivelli's Annunciation in the National Gallery.

So much for the Big Five. There still remain up aloft the rest of the birds, and these Mr. Conrad summons in a flock, so that they all fly down simultaneously and, settling on a tray, the very exceptional and entertaining turn is over.

Although surprised by the perfection of the training of these birds, I was, perhaps, more prepared than some of the audience for their happiness in their performance, because almost daily I have evidence of a pigeon's sense of fun. From a window through which my eyes stray as often as they can, I have a view of a courtyard containing a fountain under a spreading plane tree, with a little tree close by. A number of pigeons are continually drinking and bathing in the basin of the fountain, or preening their feathers or sunning themselves around its rim. The only other regular frequenters of this courtyard (beyond such negligible persons as the lawyers who maintain it) are two kittens, both animated by a single thought, which is to pursue, capture, destroy and at leisure consume, one of these pigeons. To this end they lie along the branches of the little tree endeavouring to fascinate the birds with the bright eyes of desire; to the same end they creep stealthily over the gravel, so diminishing their trifling height as almost to be sinking into the

hard ground, advancing inch by inch upon their prey. But does this cause that prey a moment's anxiety? Not one. They continue their occupation undisturbed until the kittens are as near as is desirable, and then, with a chuckle, move quickly out of range. It may be a concerted game; the kittens may be chaffing them, *sotto voce*, all the time; but I think not. I think that it is the birds' comedy, enjoyed by them to the full.

On mentioning Mr. Conrad's pigeons to an artist friend, he was reminded of an incident in Florence which I am glad to have the opportunity of recording. Once, while loitering in the City of Flowers, he found himself on the outskirts of an open-air political meeting, and remained to watch. The speaker, who was doing his best to arouse enthusiasm, had just begun to succeed, when face after face began to turn upwards in the direction of an adjacent campanile. You know how irresistible is any untoward sight, high up, how all eyes are mobilized to gaze; and soon the orator had not a single attentive listener. How could he have, when there was such a rival as a pigeon in distress, its foot having been caught in a crevice of the red brick façade? In its efforts to get free the poor creature became every moment more frantic. At last some one had the happy thought of fetching a ladder, and when it was brought and erected the orator not only had

no audience but no neighbours, for the crowd had moved in a body to its foot to cheer the rescuer on; and when the release was complete, all thought of politics had vanished from their minds.—A good story, and not the less so for being set in a country where even the smallest and least nutritious of birds are in daily danger of being blown to atoms.

II. BIRDS OF PARADISE

It is difficult nowadays to keep pace with the improvements at the Zoo. No sooner was the beautiful Aquarium a fixed London institution than we were invited to see how luxurious a home from home can be arranged in Regent's Park for pythons, alligators, and rattlesnakes; no sooner had we assimilated this fact than the doors of the new abode of the Small Birds, which rose on the site of the old reptile house, were thrown open. I can think of few pleasanter ways of spending an hour in the late afternoon between work and dinner than to loiter in this building; and also, apparently, thinks a certain Man of God—not, perhaps, yet a saint, although on his way towards Franciscan beatitude—for I watched him the other afternoon as, supplied with a tin box of maggots, he made his rounds, feeding his feathered friends, receiving from cage after cage such a welcome as assured me that he is a regular

visitor. Whether he had offered maggots to the Ariel Toucan I cannot say, for when I came upon him he was nourishing less formidable creatures; but I am sure there was nothing rabidly sectarian about him; he would not, just because of the Ariel Toucan's obviously Hebrew origin, pass by; he must have had somewhere concealed about him whatever it is that the Ariel Toucan likes best; something kosher, of course.

Having myself forgotten to bring a tin box, I had to substitute admiration for catering; and this I distributed without stint, lavishing it in particular upon the Birds of Paradise, a genus in which the Zoo seems to be very strong. How many varieties there may be, I have not inquired, but in this Small Bird House I counted no fewer than ten, beginning (advancing from left to right) with the Great Bird of Paradise, from the Aru Islands, a symphony in brown, yellow, and beige, and passing on to the Lesser Bird of Paradise from north-west New Guinea with a misty white tail. New Guinea would seem to be the ornithologist's paradise as well as the birds'; for all the strangest and most sumptuous of these exotic fowls come from there. In New Guinea you find Princess Stephanie's Bird of Paradise, chiefly black, with a peacock sheen on head and neck; and the Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise: black, with an abbreviated yellow tail; and the Lesser

Superb Bird of Paradise, with a cape of dark green and a dark green pate; and Hunstein's Magnificent Bird of Paradise, with a blue beak and blue feet, a dark green breast, an orange back, and two curved green tails like antennæ.

This is one of the most decorative birds in the Gardens, even in quiescence, but when (another *habitué* assured me) it shows off, it is gorgeous. 'Show off now! Show off now!' she adjured it, but in vain. It was close to this unwilling performer, so different from a white peacock just outside, which spread and rippled its ghostly tail for the benefit of every visitor, that the neatest and gayest of all the small birds of the Zoo is to be found: the Gouldian Grass Finch, the completest antithesis to the Great Indian Horn Bill, that masterpiece of the caricaturist's art, on the other side of the room. This sprightly little bird, as bright as a colour-box, is green, yellow, blue, white, black and violet; and, feeling that no home should be without it, I bought a pair the next day.

But I must return to the Birds of Paradise, of which there are still four to enumerate: the King Bird of Paradise from the Aru Islands, an arrangement in russet brown and yellow; Wilson's Bird of Paradise from Waigiou, with two symmetrical curved tails, having, in its green and red and blue, a nouveau-art tapestry effect; Prince Rudolph's Bird of Paradise from New Guinea, black and

blue with white eye-rims and a white beak; and Wallace's Bird of Paradise from the Batchian Islands, looking in its green cape rather like one of the mysterious diaphanous angel-fish that hover in their tank in the Aquarium. Who, I wondered, are these Princes and Princesses, these Wallaces and Wilsons and Hunsteins, whose names are to be for ever linked with lovely unbelievable birds? That is fame indeed. Some day, I thought, I must leave all, break every engagement, raise money by whatever device is possible, and myself sail to New Guinea, just to find a new Bird of Paradise and have it called after me—Lucas's Bird of Paradise. That would be a deed to live by. The bird is mightier than the pen.

So far I had experienced nothing but surprise and delight. But the reckoning was shortly to come in—one can never escape it. Just as certain as the rule of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, so is the iron law of a bill for a joy. Lingering by some of the smaller cages I found myself admiring a merry little bird, with a black head and a peacock-green breast, who whistled with shrillness but charm: the Black-Headed Sugar Bird. How delightful, I thought, to see such a bird flitting from tree to tree in its own native land! And then I found myself admiring a gay creature called the Violet Tanager and another

little Sugar Bird, the Yellow Winged, which is yellow winged only when he flies, and when in repose is, on his breast, a deep dark blue, and sparkling light blue on the top of his head—pure Oxford and Cambridge. How delightful, I thought again, to see such a bird flitting from tree to tree in its own tropical country! And then, looking to see what tropical country that was, I discovered it to be Brazil.

You know how impossible it is, after returning from a trip abroad, to avoid meeting some one who has been to the same places, and who at once convicts you of missing the best things there. 'But, my dear fellow, didn't you see the altar piece by Cellibotti!' he exclaims, in pain. 'You don't really mean to tell me you didn't climb to the Blue Lake!' says another, with a groan of pity. 'But the cathedral at Senander is the most marvellous building in the world—and you never saw it! Well! Well!' says a third. These are the amazed reproaches that are the inevitable lot of the homing traveller. No one, as it happens, had made me feel too guilty about Brazil, where I spent a month during a recent winter, until I reached the Zoo last week; but now I am tingling with mortification and the sense of time wasted, for all three of these little birds came from that land, and I never saw—not even in the Botanical Gardens at Rio—one of them.

CATS: STAGE AND OTHERWISE

AFTER having had but little and very disjointed association with cats or kittens for many years, they seem suddenly to be coming my way again. The first move in this entente was a letter from a distant friend asking me if I would be so very kind as to find for her a Persian kitten, as a companion for herself and a playmate for her Pekinese dog. I wrote back at once saying that I would of course do my best, but—a large but—did she really think it was a sound thing to import into so happy a household as hers an alien creature? Was she wise in running the risk of diluting or diverting the devotion of her dog? In her reply she said that she had naturally considered these points before writing the first time, and would I be so very kind as to get for her a Persian kitten as a companion for herself and a playmate for her Pekinese dog. It must be a Persian—not only because she had been reading Oliver Herford's delicious *Rubaiyat*, but because Persian kittens have blue hair and blue eyes.

Before I started on the enterprise I imagined the acquisition of a Persian kitten to be a simple matter. Half the unmarried women of England, I had always believed, devoted themselves to cultivating these creatures for sale, and I had merely to look up some names in their trade journal. I chose at random the most contiguous, and rang her up. Yes, she had hundreds of Persian kittens; and so I went off to see her: a distance by road of twelve miles. But when at last I found her spacious abode, and was led across lawns and garden paths to the outhouse where the cats were kept, she had but one, and that was over two years old and as big as a young puma. But the hundreds of Persian kittens? I asked. Not now, she replied; just at the moment this was the only cat for sale; but she had had, in her time, and would have again, hundreds: there must, she added, have been a little misunderstanding on the 'phone.

After visiting two other country cat-fanciers, one with nothing and one with an adorable kitten fulfilling all the conditions except that it had been bespoken, I tried the London shops. Four of the great miscellaneous stores with live-stock departments failed me. The early spring (this was in early spring), they said, is a bad time for kittens: they are not born then: a surprising statement to me, who thought that these fluffy

bantlings arrived with automatic regularity all the year round, the children of parents who recked nought of eugenics or economic stress and knew as little of Marie Stopes as of Marie Antoinette. I did, however, at last find one—the fruit, I assume, of some careless unseasonable union—and the quest was ended, and with it, I supposed, for me, for another ten years or so, any *rapprochement* with cats.

But the next evening, on visiting a new farce called 'Baby Cyclone', I found myself creeping under feline dominion once more, for who should bring down the curtain of the first act, amid laughter and applause, but a cat named Ginger. It was the duty of this cat to drink the milk that had been brought by a massive butler for the Pekinese dog 'Baby Cyclone', who was the central figure of the play. On the occasion of my visit, however, the true Ginger, a most capable and trustworthy performer, was out of the cast, owing to indisposition, and the rôle had been entrusted to his son, Ginger Junior; and Ginger Junior, I am sorry to say, proved himself anything but the usual kind of understudy, for he had to be impelled on to the stage by force, and then he forgot his part.

It was only a day or so after my visit to 'Baby Cyclone' that a friend put in my hands the latest work of the American satirical writer, Don Mar-

quis, a book called *archy and mehitabel.* Readers of the New York *Sun* and the *Herald-Tribune* will recognize these two characters, for they have been sardonically frolicking there for a long time, archy the cockroach and mehitabel the cat: through their mouths enabling their sardonic creator to get back on this fool world. Well, what should I find as I turned these seductive pages but mehitabel's story of the old trouper, a stage cat that puts the Gingers, father and son, into the novice class. But let him tell his proud story in his own words: I wish I could say capital words, but I can't; it is part of Don Marquis's scheme of fun not to let me.

In introducing the old trouper, mehitabel says:

'tom is an old theatre cat
he has given his life to the theatre
he claims that richard mansfield once kicked him out of the way and then cried because he had done it and petted him
and at another time he says in a case of emergency he played a bloodhound in a production of uncle tom s cabin
the stage is not what it used to be tom says
he puts his front paw on his breast and says they don t have it any more
they don t have it here
the old troupers are gone
there s nobody can troup any more
they are all amateurs nowadays
they haven t got it here
there are only five or six of us oldtime troupers left

this generation does not know what stage presence is
personality is what they lack
personality
where would they get the training my old friends got in the stock companies
i knew mr booth very well says tom and a law should be passed preventing anybody else from ever playing in any play he ever played in
there was a trouper for you
i used to sit on his knee and purr when i was a kitten
he used to tell me how much he valued my opinion
finish is what they lack
finish
and they haven t got it here
and again he laid his paw on his breast
for two years mr daly would not ring up the curtain unless i was in the prompter s box
they are amateurs nowadays
rank amateurs
all of them
for two seasons i played the dog in joseph jefferson s rip van winkle
it is true i never came on the stage but he knew i was just off and it helped him
i would like to see one of your modern theatre cats act a dog so well that it would convince a trouper like jo jefferson
but they haven t got it nowadays
they haven t got it here
jo jefferson had it
he had it here
i come of a long line of theatre cats
my grandfather was with forrest
he had it
he was a real trouper

my grandfather said he had a voice that used to shake the ferryboats on the north river
once he lost his beard and my grandfather dropped from the fly gallery and landed under his chin and played his beard for the rest of the act
you don t see any theatre cats that could do that nowadays
they haven t got it
they haven t got it here.'

A little while ago an American, a stranger, wrote to me asking if I would assist him in getting into the dictionaries two words that please him both for their sound and their sense. These are 'aelurophobe' and 'aelurophobia', meaning cat-hater and cat-hatred. He went even farther and, mistakenly deducing from certain dog-loving writings of mine that I cannot also like cats, invited me to become a member of the American Aelurophobes' Club. But this would be an unjust and extreme measure, for, although I am not fond of cats, the fully-grown and matured article, I am very very far from hating them; and kittens have no devotee more enchantable. The comparison between dogs and cats should, of course, never be made; because, except that certain small dogs lie about in the cats' domain, which is the lap and the environment of the fire, they are totally distinct creatures, ill-adapted to be mentioned together. As reasonably group elephants and titmice. But the theme is threadbare; let me leave it by saying that when I want

to admire, in a detached way, a wild and inscrutable but partially domesticated creature from the exotic and mysterious East, I look at a cat and am fascinated by its beauty of form and movement and the miracle of its eyes; but when I want quadrupedal sympathy, I seek the companionship of the uncomplicated animal which, for some ridiculous reason, is always antithetically pitted against it.

Room for both.

THE ROMANCE OF BARGAIN-HUNTING

'I'M very sorry,' said Robertson's pretty parlourmaid, 'but the Master says he can't see you.'

This was extraordinary. I don't claim to be irresistible, but never before had I been refused admittance to The Grange.

'He's not ill, is he?' I asked.

'No,' said the pretty parlourmaid, 'not exactly ill, but he doesn't want any one to see him.'

'It sounds like a black eye,' I said.

'Oh, no,' she replied, 'nothing like that.'

'Did he go to the sale?' I asked.

'Oh, yes.'

'And he got the desk?'

'Yes, it's here.'

'And a bargain?'

'I understand so.'

'Good,' I said. 'But how odd not to want to see me and tell me about it! Won't you ask him again? It's most unusual.'

'I know,' she said. 'You, of all people! But

his orders were not to let any one in—any one. Still, I'll ask.'

She went off, while, moving down to the rose-garden, I regaled myself with its diversity of scents.

In a minute or two the pretty parlourmaid came tripping down the steps. 'Master's very sorry,' she said, 'and he hopes you won't be offended, but he doesn't feel that he can see any one. He's going to London by the 12.15 and won't be back for a few days. After that he'll be delighted to see you.'

'Very well,' I said; and I returned to my own rose-garden, which is just on the other side of the hedge—a hedge which until this bewildering morning had been the only thing between us for years. What on earth could have happened? I had seen my old friend under most circumstances of intimacy: I had even sat by his bed when he had a belated attack of mumps; what, short of some shattering domestic calamity, could cause him to hide like this? And I was certain it wasn't that, from the amused and rather mischievous smile that had been playing about the corners of the pretty parlourmaid's pretty mouth.

One advantage of living in a small village is that a Mercury is always at hand. Whom should I see seated in the loggia, waiting for me, but our mutual friend, Carton?

'Just the man I wanted,' I said. 'A most amazing thing's happened. Robertson's refused to see me.'

He laughed.

'Well,' I said, 'I'll buy it. What have I done?'

'Oh, it's not you,' he said. 'It's himself. He's the victim. But I'll tell you. You know about the desk?'

'Of course,' I said. 'He got it all right. At his own price, I gather.'

'Oh, yes. I was there; I went with him. That's the whole joke. You see, he had one of his economical fits and wasn't going to be done by any one. There were not likely to be any dealers because the desk was the only good thing in the place and no one but Robertson knew its value; but even then he wanted to get it for a song. You know how a sale brings out our pettinesses?

'The farm was just far enough away', he went on, 'for the auctioneer not to know him, and so he got himself up in all his oldest things. You never saw such a scarecrow. We left the car half-a-mile away and walked the rest. After about five minutes he stopped and asked me how he looked. "Horrible," I said.

' "Do I look poor?" he asked.

' "You look either a pauper or a miser," I said.

'"Not a miser, I hope," he said.

'"There's only one thing that gives you away," I said.

'"What's that?" he asked.

'"Your teeth," I said; "they're too good. They're a rich man's teeth."

'"Very well then," he said, "I'll go without them," and he pulled out the dentures, as I believe the things are called, and popped them in his pocket, both sets, upper and lower.

'"Now?" he mumbled.

'"Perfect," I said; and we marched into the marquee where the sale was being held, and where he made me leave him for fear my superior attire would give the show away.

'Well,' Carton continued, 'he got the desk for a ridiculously small sum, and we set off for the car again; and as we walked, he put his hand in his pocket for his teeth in order that we might talk it all over. "Good Heavens!" he cried, "they're gone!" And so they had. His clothes were so old the pockets were full of holes.

'Well, we walked backwards and forwards between the car and the marquee twenty times, till I was worn out, but never a sign of the dentures, never a gleam of porcelain or bonzoline, or whatever they're made of. Gone for ever—a new set too!

'By the time he is comfortably furnished again,'

Carton concluded, 'I should say that that desk will have cost him a hundred-and-fifteen pounds at the very least. So now you see why you weren't welcome this morning. He's practically speechless and looks a hundred.'

'I see,' I said. 'A sad case of the biter bit.'

'Well,' replied Carton, 'I shouldn't have used the word "biter" myself. It will be a long time before our friend is that.'

A VISIT TO NICOTINA HOUSE

IT may not be generally known that there has recently been added to the educational establishments of England a refined school for the daughters of gentlefolk where the art of smoking plays an important part in the curriculum. In view of the requirements of a modern girl 'coming out' and entering Society, it was felt that instruction in the nice conduct of a cigarette was essential; hence the emphasis laid upon it in this most up-to-date institution. Regard is paid also to other branches of learning, such as cards and dancing, but very properly a knowledge of tobacco comes first.

'You see,' said Miss Virginia Weed, the charming and energetic head-mistress, 'we realized that a girl who is a tyro at smoking stands very little chance to-day. She would be laughed at as a peasant or, even worse, receive the cold shoulder as a Puritan or prig. And that would be terrible.'

'Terrible,' I said.

'There is also a practical or, if you will, a mer-

cenary side to it,' she added. 'You must have noticed the new tendency of tobacco manufacturers to enlist the services of pretty young women in the advertisement of their wares?'

I said that, all unobservant as I was, this development had not escaped me.

'You may also be aware.' Miss Weed continued, 'that considerable sums of money are disbursed to those who are willing to say in print that they prefer this or that brand to all others.'

I said that I had not supposed that such recommendations were gratuitous, giving anything for nothing having become as obsolete as old-fashioned femininity.

'Well,' said Miss Weed, 'you will agree that a girl should be prepared for all the honourable avenues that lead to pin-money. That, at any rate, is what we feel here, and that is one reason why smoking is taught as carefully, if not more so, than such acquirements as can be picked up, so to speak, as one runs, such as the three R's.'

'You have no classes in tea-making?' I inquired.

'Certainly not,' she replied.

'Nor in any domestic accomplishment?'

'We teach making-up, of course.'

'And the piano?' I asked.

'Oh, no. That has completely gone out. But we have lessons in changing gramophone-needles.'

I congratulated her on such thoroughness, and she seemed pleased.

'And manners?' I said. 'You pay, I suppose, little or no attention to this unimportant subject?'

'As little as possible,' she replied. 'This is an essentially modern school, and we want to fit our scholars for the world as it is to-day. But I am sure you would like to see something of our methods in action. This, for example'—opening a door—'is where the youngest pupils are trained.'

We entered a large room where a number of girls were lolling about on sofas and in very deep arm-chairs, with cigarettes in their hands or mouths. Noticing that they looked far from happy, I said so.

'That is true,' said Miss Weed. 'But they will be, in time. These, you see, are beginners, and at first there are discomforts. We start them on the mildest tobacco obtainable and let them advance by very slow degrees. In fact we begin with a blend of something absolutely innocuous, with only a little of the true leaf. Many girls, of course, like it and therefore never use this room at all. Others acquire the art only with suffering. But why not? Art that comes too easily is rarely admirable. Moreover, what they are learning in suffering they will teach in puffs.'

'But supposing', I said, 'that a girl is incorrigible; that—like that poor creature who just

bolted for the door—she shows no aptitude for this accomplishment?'

'Often', said Miss Weed, 'she is expelled.'

'Expelled!' I exclaimed.

'Perhaps the word is rather strong,' said Miss Weed. 'Their parents are asked to remove them. But such cases are very few. We have not had more than two in a year; and, as smoking gets more and more into the blood of the nation, there will be fewer.'

'And do you find much need to punish?' I asked.

'Very little,' said Miss Weed. 'They are good girls. The gravest fault is secret non-smoking. Sometimes one is caught slipping away into the garden so as to get a little fresh air without any tobacco fumes. We have to be watchful of that and to reprimand accordingly. And we are strict too about cigarette-cases and match-boxes. There is an inspection every morning, and should these not be properly filled and ready for the day the culprit is dealt with. But we are, I assure you,' and Miss Weed laughed brightly, 'a very happy family.'

I was then shown the room where the tests were applied. The girls, being given cigarettes of different tobacco, Turkish, Egyptian and American, and sub-varieties of these, were asked to state which was which. Some, even among

the little ones, displayed extraordinary discrimination.

'And now', said Miss Weed, 'I will show you some of the proficient smokers at their daily avocations.' She led the way from one room to another, where all the pupils had cigarettes either between their lips or in holders, irrespective of their occupation. Miss Weed proudly drew my attention to this masterly disregard of whether or not the smoke got in their eyes or where the ash fell.

'Of course you allow them to smoke during meals?' I asked.

'Of course,' said Miss Weed. 'It is in fact compulsory.'

DAUGHTERS OF EXPERIENCE

I HAVE lately spent some entertaining hours in the study of the proverbs of the European nations, and I have made a list of those which have most amused or impressed me. My title comes from the Dutch saying, which runs thus: 'Spreekwoorden zijn dochters der dagelijksche ondervinding', meaning (as no reader of this book needs to be told), 'Proverbs are the Daughters of Experience.'

Should these examples of 'the wisdom of many and the wit of one' have a fault, it lies in their unadventurousness. They are marked by excessive prudence, worldly-artfulness and watchfulness, due, I suppose, to the peasant origin of most of them: peasants, in those days, having to be always on their guard. These adages might indeed be described as the poor man's armour, reminding him at every turn to be suspicious, cautious, to expect nothing and be contented with little. Should the proverbialist succeed in helping the poor man to get enough to eat, to protect himself against the rich and to marry off his daughters,

he has served his purpose. None the less, even the rich, who have other weapons, can learn something. Here is my selection:

God is where He was.

God defend me from the still water, and I'll keep myself from the rough.

God gives every bird its food, but it must fly for it.

God gives almonds to some who have no teeth.

God cures, and the doctor takes the fee.

Women conceal all that they know not.

Woe to the house where there is no chiding.

He who marries a widow will often have a dead man's head thrown in his dish.

He was scarce of news, who told that his father was hanged.

He that is content with his poverty is wonderfully rich.

He that is busy is tempted but by one devil; he that is idle, by a legion.

He that has no fools, knaves, or beggars in his family was begot by a flash of lightning.

All things require skill but an appetite.

A man is not good or bad, for one action.

Physicians' faults are covered with earth and rich men's with money.

The cockroach is never in the right where the fowl is concerned.

A golden bit does not make the horse any better.

The wren spreads his feet wide in his own house.

The barber learns his art on the orphan's face.

In time the grass becomes milk.

Love your neighbour, but don't pull down the fence.

If a man would learn to pray let him go often to sea.

There never was a banquet so sumptuous but some one dined ill at it.

He that would be healthy must wear his winter clothes in summer.

You must row with the oars you have got.

He that is more civil than usual, either wants to cozen you or has need of you.

Mules make a great fuss about their ancestors having been horses.

Golden bishop, wooden crosier; wooden bishop, golden crosier.

Never let the bottom of your purse or of your mind be seen.

He begins to grow bad who believes himself good.

He who inherits a farthing is expected to disburse a dollar.

Many have too much, but none have enough.

It is time enough to take off your hat when you see the man.

Life is half spent before one knows what life is.

Give to a pig when it grunts, and to a child when it cries, and you will have a fine pig, and a bad child.

Misfortune comes on horseback and goes away on foot.

It is easy to bid the devil be your guest, but difficult to get rid of him.

A glad heart seldom sighs, but a sorrowful mouth often laughs.

Giving is fishing.

A full stomach praises Lent.

He who rides on a tiger must never dismount.

You can tie a broken cord together, but there will be a knot in it.

Argus at home, a mole abroad.

Go to your aunt's house, but not every day.

Leave the jest at its best.

Give out that you have many friends, and believe that you have but few.

He who would tell the truth must have one foot in the stirrup.

Yesterday is a dream; to-morrow a wish.

Much wisdom is lost in poor men's mouths.

He who whispers, lies.

Do not fret for news, it will grow old and you will know it.

Lawyers' houses are built of fools' heads.

It is only at the tree loaded with fruit that people throw stones.

Act so in the valley, that you need not fear those who stand on the hill.

A glaring sunny morning, a woman who talks Latin, and a child reared on wine, never come to a good end.

'Had I known' is a poor man.

Give orders, and do no more, and nothing will be done.

Him who errs forgive once, but never twice.

A borrowed horse and your own spurs make short miles.

Enjoy your little while the fool is seeking for more.

Good management is better than good income.

Love makes time pass away, and time makes love pass away.

If a man would know what he is, let him anger his neighbours.

If envy were a fever, all the world would be ill.

If the prince wants an apple, his servants take the tree.

If the rings are lost, here are the fingers still.

Where there is little bread, cut first.

There's not enough if there's too much.

They are all honest men, but my cloak is not to be found.

The injurer never forgives.

The king's chaff is better than other folk's corn.

The lame goat does not take a siesta.

The little alms are the good alms.

The magistrate's son gets out of every scrape.

Who would regard all things complacently must wink at a great many.

Great scholars are not the shrewdest men.

Good bargains empty the purse.

Dress slowly when you are in a hurry.

It is the old cow's notion that she never was a calf.

Give time time.

Do not rejoice at my grief, for when mine is old yours will be new.

If you can't smile, don't open a shop.

He who passes a winter's day passes one of his mortal enemies.

You may preach ever so long to the wolf: he will nevertheless call for lamb before night.

Wealth is not his who makes it, but his who enjoys it.

The miser and the pig are of no use till dead.

She who is born a beauty is born betrothed.

Take a woman's first advice, and not her second.

Tell your friend a lie, and if he keeps it secret tell him the truth.

A true gentleman would rather have his clothes torn than mended.

Put your hand in your conscience and see if it doesn't come out as black as pitch.

Praise a fine day at night.

A man does not look behind the door unless he has stood there himself.

A slothful man never has time.

Of other men's leather, large thongs.

He who does not mix with the crowd knows nothing.

He who eats pears with his master should not choose the best.

Would you know your daughter? See her in company.

The gardener's feet do no harm to the garden.

When shepherds quarrel, the wolf has a winning game.

The secret in swimming is to know how to take care of your clothes.

There are more old drunkards than old doctors.

He who would relish his food must not see it cooked.

Health without money is a half-malady.

If a beard were all, the goat would be the winner.

When there is no wind every man is a pilot.

Who has a head won't want for a hat.

The greatest cunning is to have none at all.

Nobody so wise but has a little folly to spare.

He is nearest to God who has the fewest wants.

At a dangerous passage yield precedence.

A woman laughs when she can, and weeps when she pleases.

Every fool is wise when he holds his tongue.

Better afield with the birds than hanging on lords.

Desire beautifies what is ugly.

An apothecary need not be long a cuckold.

A wise man and a fool together know more than a wise man alone.

God sends nothing but what can be borne.

He who gives to the public gives to no one.

It is better to hear the nightingale sing than the mouse gnaw.

A man of straw needs a woman of gold.

Every priestling conceals a popeling.

The best of the mill is that the sacks can't speak.

The day I did not sweep the house there came to it one I did not expect.

A good swimmer is not safe against drowning.

A hundred years hence we shall all be bald.

A golden key opens every door save that of heaven.

If you let them put the calf on your shoulders, it will not be long before they clap on the cow.

Every man carries an enemy in his own bosom.

A wise man may learn of a fool.

The Daughters of Joy are mostly orphans.

The devil tempts all, but the idle man tempts the devil.

It is easier to make a lady of a peasant-girl than a peasant-girl of a lady.

Nothing in haste but catching fleas.

One 'Take this' is better than ten 'God help you!'

Better a friend's bite than an enemy's caress.

People take more pains to be damned than to be saved.

Who goes himself is in earnest, who sends is indifferent.

It is a bad thing to be a knave, but worse to be known for one.

The difficult thing is to get the foot in the stirrup.

The handsomest woman can only give what she has.

Every truth is not to be told.

If you are an anvil, be patient; if you are a hammer, strike hard.

Everything may be repaired except the neck-bone.

A lawyer and a cartwheel must be greased.

When the cook and the steward fall out we hear who stole the butter.

If the wife sins, the husband is not innocent.

Talk of sporting, and buy game in the market.

Since the house is on fire, let us warm ourselves.

He who would make a fool of himself will find many to help him.

When all other sins are old, avarice is still young.

Samson was a strong man, but he could not pay money before he had it.

It is better to have to do with God than with His saints.

Rather have a little one for your friend than a great one for your enemy.

Though my father-in-law is a good man, I do not like a dog with a bell.

A wise man does at first what a fool must do at last.

Doctor Luther's shoes do not fit every parish priest.

Better a lean agreement than a fat lawsuit.

He that is not gallant at twenty, strong at thirty, rich at forty, or experienced at fifty, will never be gallant, strong, rich, or experienced.

Nothing is lost on a journey by stopping to pray or to feed your horse.

He who loves sorrow will always find something to mourn over.

The mare's kick does not harm the colt.

Who is righteous overmuch is a morsel for the Old One.

There is more disputing about the shell than the kernel.

The thief cannot find any tree that suits him for a gallows.

The poor man seeks for food, the rich man for appetite.

When it is God's will to plague a man, a mouse can bite him to death.

To become rich in this world it needs only to turn one's back on God.

A father maintains ten children better than ten children one father.

All gardeners know better than other gardeners.

Go to your rich friend's house when invited; to your poor friend's without invitation.

A friend's fault should be known, but not abhorred.

A little too late, much too late.

'Take what you want,' quoth God, 'take it—and pay for it.'

THE REGISTERED LETTER

'I DON'T say I've had a good holiday,' my friend said. 'That would be going too far. But something very interesting happened in it. For the first time in my life I was broke.'

'That's a pretty good record,' I said. 'Why, you must be fifty?'

'Forty-nine,' he replied hurriedly. 'But when I say broke, I mean absolutely broke. Of course I've been hard-up time and again; but never before have I been utterly stony; done, without a bob, without a bean. Has it ever happened to you?'

'I don't think so,' I said. 'There's always been something, if only postage-stamps.'

'Nor could I pop anything,' he continued. 'I was miles from a town, and if I had gone there, it was too small for a pawnbroker. I had in fact deliberately cut myself off in order to fish and sketch and be alone. I was in a tiny cottage in the French Pyrenees belonging to an American friend, and no one knew the address but my

housekeeper in London, and she was pledged not to give it away, except under very remarkable circumstances. You see, I really was trying to get a holiday.

'I started out with money enough, and should have been perfectly right if I hadn't fallen for some old silver in a farmhouse where I was getting lunch. It was too beautiful to miss—you shall see it some day—and I gave what they asked, entirely miscalculating my reserves. The result was that after I had bought my next household supplies I had nothing left but just enough francs to communicate with my bank in London asking for a remittance.

'The first day or so it was all right, but I received rather a nasty jar when the butcher wouldn't let me have anything more on tick. He was sorry, but he did not know Monsieur and, I suspect he added to himself, Monsieur was an artist, and you know what artists are. Monsieur hitherto had always paid in cash and that was the custom in those parts. In Paris no doubt bills could be run up; but not there. He (this bestial butcher) was a poor man and one must live.

'Not only did he live, but the brute told the other shopkeepers—the baker and the grocer—and they too no longer greeted me with the old smiles. It is terrible how quickly a French smile can fade.

'When I explained my difficulties they were not moved. Absence of money in a stranger is not a subject of sympathy to the Gaul. That foreigners should never be anything but rich is almost the first article in his creed.

'By eating as little as possible and making what use I could of the neglected garden, I managed to get along, spending most of my time watching for the postman and wondering what could have happened to the bank's letter. Could my telegram have been suppressed and the francs for it misappropriated? One has little faith in these rural post-office people. That was a disquieting thought, if you like. Had the bank's letter been wrongly addressed? You know how stupid the heat of summer can make people in offices.

'I tried to find the *curé* to get him to reason with the butcher, but he lived miles away and came to this remote spot only when sent for by his flock, to confirm, to marry or to inter.

'I would have offered the butcher my watch, but the idea of being without knowledge of the time was intolerable. It's true that he let me have two veal cutlets on the strength of a pair of sleeve-links, but that was all.

'And then at last the postman arrived.

'You know what the postman who brings a registered letter in France is like? The importance of him? Carrying a registered letter gives

him the right to burst even into your bedroom; and it was to see him standing beside my bed that one morning I awoke, for being now reduced to living on the principle that he who sleeps dines, I was lying late.

'He proffered his receipt-book and his pen and ink, and asked for my signature. I signed and held out my hand for the letter; but I was in too much of a hurry. There was a fee that must be paid first.

' "But," I said, "I have no money. It is for the money which you now bring me that I have been waiting."

'He intimated with perfect French clarity that, although that was possibly so, the payment of the fee must precede the surrender of the letter. No fee, no letter.

'I again outlined the situation, explaining that he himself was holding back the goose which laid the golden eggs. If he would allow me to open the envelope, he would see that it was filled with money, some of which, in addition to the official fee, would be his as a *pour-boire*. The incident would then be closed and he could have his lunch.

'But he was inflexible.

'At last we hit on a compromise. He could not let me have the letter without first receiving the fee, but there was no reason why he himself

should not open it and, all being as I said, hand me the contents.

'He didn't like it; it was unprofessional; but he would do it.

'Good! Very slowly then he severed the envelope and, all impatient, I reached for the notes.

'But I reached for notes in vain, for this is what he gave me.'

At this point my friend took from his pocket-book a folded paper and handed it to me. I read as follows:

'Dear Old Man,—

'I am truly sorry to be a nuisance, but I am on the rocks and can think only of you as a rescuer. Can you let me have twenty pounds at once? I extracted your address from your housekeeper at the point of the bayonet (you must not be angry with her) and I have registered the letter with my last sixpence to make sure of your getting it.

'Yours gratefully,

'Everard Case.'

THE CRIES OF LONDON

THAT very charming series of idylls of the streets known as 'Wheatley's Cries of London', which in its perfect state is a collector's treasure, and in modern reproduction lends distinction to many an inn parlour, numbers, I fancy, twelve. But a little book spread open before me as I write, devoted to the same theme, takes note of no fewer than forty-eight kerbstone merchants in the London of the beginning of the last century; and it is interesting to see what a many have ceased to be, and how widely monetary values have changed. Francis Wheatley (whose beautiful wife Clara was his model for the more comely of the vendors) had completed his dozen several years before my little book appeared, in 1804, with no artist's name to any of the plates —illustrators in those days being even more negligible folk than the writers of such compilations; but that must not lead us to suppose that thirty-six new hawkers had in the meantime arisen: merely that for Wheatley's purposes a selection, limited to twelve, had to be made. Not only is

the pictor ignotus but the author too, the author's task, by no means an easy one, having been to compose 'an epigram in verse adapted to each cry', and to prefix 'a poetical description of the British Metropolis'.

In 1804, according to the poet, among the distinguishing sights of London were—

> Hackney-coachmen ever drinking,
> Hackney-writers void of thinking. . . .
> Tipsy barrow-women tumbling,
> Dukes with chimney-sweepers jumbling,
> Lords with milliners debating,
> Ladies with their footmen prating. . . .

All that is, of course, over; but the following line has a too familiar ring:

> Statesmen in the treasury juggling.

Now for the cries. The first is a knife-grinder at work for a butcher, and him we still retain. The next has gone for ever: a ferryman calling 'Over? Over? Want a boat, your honour?' with Westminster Bridge in the background. We are the poorer for his loss. Then: 'Buy a duck! Buy a fat fowl', a branch of enterprise that has left the streets and belongs now to poulterers. 'Fine China oranges!'—oranges are still in demand, but we no longer associate them with China; only in the saying: 'All Lombard Street to a China orange' is the collocation preserved.

We come again to the obsolete with 'Lily, Lily White Sand Ho!' shouted by a boy with a donkey, not looking as jolly as the old simile would have him. This sand was not for the purpose of drying ink, but for floors. Says the epigrammatist:

> In winter time when dirty shoes
> Are apt to daub the floor,
> Ne'er let the honest Sandman pass
> Unheeded by the door.

But he has passed for ever. Floors, no doubt, still are sanded, but the material is not ass-borne. 'One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns!' and 'Chairs to mend!' we all have heard; but where is now the Jew with the triple crown calling 'Any shoes, hats, or old clothes?' The artist has made him a forbidding enough figure; but the poet thus corrects any bad impression:

> Yet children never should abuse
> Nor treat these men with scorn,
> Remembering that among the Jews
> Our blessed Lord was born.

The next cry, 'Cat's meat! Dogs' meat!' is still with us, but now with the accent on the cat; and then 'Sweep! Sweep!'—also still to be heard, although the practitioner is no longer accompanied, as in the picture, by two climbing boys. And to-day he has normally a hand-truck. Should an artist wish to depict a modern London

chimney-sweep of a very special kind, let me urge him to go to Chiswick, where there is one who makes his rounds in a little cart drawn by a Shetland pony hardly bigger than a sheep-dog and shining with polished brass harness fittings. 'Cherries round and sound, a penny a pound.' Cherries, yes, but no longer for a penny a pound. 'Any milk, above or below?' 'Choice fruit, madam, fine pippins!' 'Do you want any good matches?'—these cries, in modified and abbreviated form, we still hear, but the matches then were long sticks steeped in sulphur and, unlike anything else in this catalogue, far more costly than now. Was it not Herbert Spencer who said that cheap matches were the greatest boon that had come to humanity in the past hundred years? Yet not always are they as cheap as they should be. Nothing, some one has said, is so disappointing as folks; and I thought again of this melancholy truth when, the other day, after, in a spasm of pity, buying from a forlorn and shivering match-seller who stands always in the same place, four boxes that I did not need, at three-halfpence each, I found that he had subtracted from each of them nearly a third of its quota, with which to fill others. His eyes tell me, every morning, that I must long since have used up my purchase; but I cannot make another, nor have I the courage to explain to him why.

'Come buy my fine singing birds!' is an invitation that is probably still known in the East End, and 'Flounders! Live flounders!' may survive as a seaside cry; but the man with a roulette board, tempting the young to gamble for nuts—'Nuts for nothing! All prizes and no blanks!'—has been legislated away. 'Fresh-gathered scarlet strawberries!' we know, but 'Green and young Hastings!' has a strange sound—Hastings being peas in the pod. 'Images, very pretty, very fine!'—this takes me back to a time in my childhood when Italian boys carried trays of plaster casts about the streets. Beethoven was always among them, I remember; and sometimes Verdi. Not for years have I seen one. 'Any work for the cooper?'—that also is obsolete. 'Eels, live eels!' may probably be heard in Whitechapel, but one does not meet with the cry in Kensington; and 'Dust ho!' vanished when the municipal authorities became our scavengers. 'Come buy my watercresses!' (pronounced creases) we know, but what would be the effect on habitués of restaurants and oyster bars, accustomed to be asked anything from fourpence to eightpence apiece for their beloved bivalves, if there were to fall on their ears the dulcet strain, 'Here's your fine natives, three a penny, all fat and good O!'?

'Mackerel, new mackerel!' I have often heard at Brighton, although not 'Green and large

cucumbers'—yet the picture would be almost of the present date if bananas were substituted. The next cry is a very attractive one: 'Come, my little heroes! Here are colours for all regiments!' Says the epigrammatist:

> 'Come give us our weapons,' the striplings all cry,
> 'Our colours, ye officers, bring,
> The hosts of proud France we'll united defy,
> And fight for our country and King!'

'Gooseberries a penny a pint, gooseberries!'—that persists; but 'Buy a live goose!' no. Who would do that in the heart of London? One is surprised that any one ever had such courage. 'Buy a live lobster' is a not much less formidable proposition; but 'Sprats as big as herrings, all alive O' puts less strain on the humanitarian. 'Apples all hot and ready roasted'; this is included among the cries, but oddly enough there is no reference either to chestnuts or baked potatoes, both of which still persist, to warm first our hands and then our interiors. 'Shoe strings a penny a pair', 'Nice flowers, Madam'—these are common appeals to-day; and so is 'Any muffins or crumpets?' —but I am pained to note that in 1804 the muffin man did not ring a bell and did not carry his tray on his head and did not cover it with green baize.

'Buy a roasting jack' is shouted no more, nor

'White Conduit loaves!' 'Sixpence a pound, fine filberts!' 'Hot spice gingerbread hot!' 'Potatoes, three full pound a penny, potatoes!' 'Rabbits, fine rabbits!' 'Any work for the tinker?' 'Buy a mat or hair broom'—nothing obsolete here except the price of potatoes; but what about 'Jemmies'? 'Come, buy my jemmies, my pretty little Tartars!' cries a man carrying a bundle of long sticks. In the picture a boy is eagerly buying one; yet the poet's description leads one to suppose that a Jemmy Tartar was nothing whatever but an instrument of punishment in school. The young lambs of 'Young lambs to sell' would seem to be toy lambs that were sold only on May Day while Jack-in-the-Green was gambolling. 'New almanacks new, some lies and some true' we no longer hear, but vendors of evening papers are still with us. And, finally, cry number forty-eight, is Old Charley's intimation, 'Past twelve o'clock and a cloudy morning!' Charley has gone, but not the cloud.

A MEMORY OF ELLEN TERRY

WHILE turning over some old papers the other day I came upon a copy of a souvenir of one of the charitable matinées which were so common during the War. This particular performance was known as *Ellen Terry's Bouquet*, that illustrious lady being its nominal presenter, and it was held at the Lyric Theatre on 29 June, 1917, its special purpose being to raise money for the concert parties that were then being sent out to France for the beguilement of the troops. To what extent it was successful I have no recollection; my own share in it was confined to providing Miss Terry, who was then an old lady in her seventieth year —although old only in time, and still full of fun and irresponsible high spirits, but having lost the capacity of systematically recollecting anything whatever—with a public appearance which should carry with it no need to learn or speak a single word. That was the bargain. She would lend her incomparable name and personality, but she must not be asked to commit any-

thing to a memory that no longer could be trusted even for a minute.

The conditions were hard but not insurmountable, and the 'Prologue to *Ellen Terry's Bouquet*', which lies before me, was the result: one of the limited number of copies (now very scarce) prepared for sale at the matinée and converted into a very desirable possession by four lithographed plates, two being in colour, from the sure and brilliant hand of Mrs. Laura Knight, since elected an A.R.A., and raised to the ranks of the Dames of the British Empire.

At that time Miss Terry was living in a little Georgian house in King's Road, Chelsea, in the care of her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Gordon Craig, and the two children: Nelly Craig, a sweet maternal type of girl, aged about sixteen, and Teddy, a few years younger, a boy of lively apprehension and charm, whose eager features were lighted by the Terry radiance. They are now grown up. Nelly I have not heard of since those crowded hours when we all rehearsed, but her brother is acquiring a reputation as a deviser of settings for the films, and, in order not to conflict with that master of décor, his father, has taken the name of Carrick. I say we all rehearsed, because when the time came to decide how to deal with their grandmother's embargo of silence, it seemed that these two children must provide the solu-

tion; and in fact the word grandmother opened the way. Since, in revue, according to the French model, there must be a compère and a commère, why not also a gran'mère? Why not indeed? That then, as you will see, was how the problem was dealt with.

Our first rehearsals were in the little parlour or the little paved garden of the King's Road cottage, and if we did not concentrate as much as we ought, the fault was entirely the gran'mère's, for although she had stipulated for silence as regards the dialogue itself, this did not mean she was to be dumb in her own character. The result was that, as whenever she thought of anything she wanted to say, she said it, we were always departing from the point. Who was it that was coming to tea? What was that play she had seen yesterday?—most delightful. Where were her spectacles? Where was her bag? Or she would be reminded of a story from the past, and naturally I would not interrupt that; indeed, I was guilty of luring her on to more. But perhaps the principal cause of digression was her grandson, whom she adored and adored volubly. 'Isn't he a darling?' she would say. 'He's doing so well at school too.' 'Look at his dear little face!'

In spite of such pleasant divagations, our work was at last done and here is the Prologue in its entirety:

PROLOGUE TO 'ELLEN TERRY'S BOUQUET'

Nelly is discovered arranging flowers. She has her back to the audience. Enter Teddy.

TEDDY. You here? I left you studying that book.

NELLY. And what about your Latin?

She suddenly realizes where they are and runs her eyes in wonder over the house from stalls to gallery.

Teddy! Look!

TEDDY. Why, it's a theatre!

NELLY. *Ecstatically.* And we—we're in it!

TEDDY. Let's play we're really actors for a minute.

NELLY. Oh yes, do let's.

TEDDY. Let's think we're in revue. You'll be the commère.

He receives from the wings two sticks; one a cane and one a long Pompadour staff.

NELLY. What do commères do?

TEDDY. Do? Why, they wear enormous hats and things.
Carry a stick (*gives her the staff*) and stand just by the wings,

And ask the compère all about the folks,
And give him opportunities for jokes.
I'll be the compère.

NELLY. *Wistfully.* Yes, I thought you would.

TEDDY. *Self-righteously—on his defence.* It's not
because it must be some one good,
Nor is it 'just my selfishness' again;
It's merely this—that compères must
be men.
Compères are always men, and com-
mères girls.
We make the jokes; while you—you

Nelly still discontented.

sup with Earls.
You ride in cars and wear the loveliest
dresses,
And Colonels toast your beauty at their
messes.

NELLY. *Not yet satisfied.* But you have all the
lines.

TEDDY. Of course. Who ever
Heard of a girl both beautiful and
clever?

NELLY. Ah! there you're wrong.
Excitedly. I tell you what we'll do,
We'll introduce a bombshell in revue,
By having something absolutely new.
Points to herself. Commère— (*points to*

him) compère—We'll have a gran'-mère too!

TEDDY. A gran'mère? What a notion! How absurd!

NELLY. No, not at all, she'll be a splendid third,
And make it easier for me by half,

With an inspiration, realizing that T. is still a vain, self-centred, obstinate male,

And give you double chances for a laugh.

TEDDY. *Convinced.* Something in that. A fellow must be funny
Or else the audience will grudge their money.
Who shall it be?

NELLY. I've thought of that already.

She whispers.

TEDDY. Don't tickle!

She whispers again.

TEDDY. Louder!

She whispers again.

NELLY. O, do listen, Teddy!

She whispers again.

TEDDY. *Assimilating the glad and astonishing news.*
Not really?
NELLY. Yes.
TEDDY. There couldn't be a better!
If only—do you truly think we'd get her?
NELLY. I'm almost sure we could. *Points back.*
She's just out there.
The positively sweetest, best gran'mère!
TEDDY. *Incredulously.* She's just outside?
NELLY. Yes.
TEDDY. Fetch her in then, do.
NELLY. No, you go, Teddy, she'll say yes to you:
For you, she'll even caper in revue.

Teddy starts to go off by middle opening, but, struck by a misgiving, comes back.

TEDDY. *Anxiously.* She won't disgrace us, will she? Have stage fright?
NELLY. Not if you take her hand—and hold it tight.
TEDDY. Since she's so new to acting, we must teach her—
There never was so innocent a creature!

He goes off by middle opening and returns leading Miss Ellen Terry.

TEDDY. *Taking up instructor's attitude—to Miss*

Terry. Now listen—you're a gran'mère, you must know,
And therefore Queen and Empress of this show.
We're all your subjects here (*indicates house*) from roof to floor—

He and Nelly sink on their knees.

NELLY. With but one simple duty: to adore.

They adore.

TEDDY. *Rising.* Now you must make a weeny teeny speech
To everybody here—a word to each.

Miss Terry expresses horrified dissent.

NELLY. You say it for her, Teddy, you *can* speak;

Miss Terry expresses the utmost relief.

Her voice is so unmusical, so weak,

Miss Terry acquiesces with great conviction.

Tell them she loves to see so many here,

Miss Terry agrees.

Tell them she holds her public very dear,

Miss Terry agrees.

Tell them she welcomes in a special way
The wounded heroes who have come to-day.

Miss Terry kisses her hand to the gallery, reserved for wounded men.

Tell them she hopes the turns to be presented
Will keep our kindly patrons well contented,
And ask them, 'mid their moments of hilarity,
To bear in mind the merits of this Charity.

Miss Terry's enthusiastic acquiescence is almost articulate.

NELLY. *Racking her brains.*
There's nothing else that I can think of now.

TEDDY (*to Miss Terry*). Since your oration's finished, make a bow.

Miss Terry bows.

Meanwhile Nelly receives from the wings a basket of roses which she hands to Miss Terry. As she gives it, she turns it round, revealing on the other side a card which says 'MY WORDS ARE ROSES.'

Miss Terry then throws these roses one by one among the audience, and when all are thrown, the Curtain falls.

—Such was the Prologue, which was produced with much ingenuity and a vast deal of patience by Mr. Harry Grattan.

But the joke is that although the elimination of all spoken words was Miss Terry's own stern condition, it happened that as the rehearsals proceeded, and particularly after we had transferred them to a real stage, she began with exquisite feminine inconsistency to get restive, and from restiveness passed on to complaint. Other performers were asked to sympathize. Could they explain why Mr. Lucas had not given her anything to say? Was it not extraordinary that she —she!—should be invited to appear again in public and not have a single word? Very strange! She couldn't understand it at all! The audience would think she was breaking up!

I could see her looking sideways at me as she whispered these awful charges, and gradually I came to feel myself a villain. She was therefore promised an epilogue all to herself, which we had some one to inscribe in the largest block letters on a series of cards—for her beautiful eyes had long been dimming.

At the end of the matinée, then, this is what

occurred. Miss Terry, all alone and wearing an aggrieved expression, approached the footlights and read as follows:

Behold the victim of an author's spite!
An hour ago—you saw?—he gagged me tight:
You saw how I was treated; saw the way
Those children robbed me of my little say?
Once more the Younger Generation won
And left their elder baulked, frustrated, done!

Looks right and left nervously. Comes nearer the audience. Confidentially:

But now I'm unattended and alone,
I'm going to tell you something on my own.
Looks fearfully round again. I want to tell you
why we're here to-day,
And why it was I gathered this 'Bouquet'.
The reason is (*again looks round nervously*). Oh
dear! I'm so afraid
They're coming back before my speech is made.
(To have a speech to make and want to make it,
And then to see two little wretches take it,
Is terrible, outrageous. Is it fair—
I ask you—thus to treat a poor Gran'mère?)
The reason is—I'll make it very brief—
That music brings the fighting man relief.
The gallant soldiers who are battling for us
Are comforted and solaced by a chorus,

And cheered, however perilous their case,
By thoughts of concerts waiting at the base.
There's some up there (*pointing to the Gallery*)—
dear boys!—who'll say that's true,
Sir Douglas Haig (God bless him!) says so,
too.

Looks round again, nervously, and is reassured.

Well, there you have it. If harmonious charms
Are still to stimulate our men-at-arms,
And help them through their hardships, and repay
A little of our debt to them to-day,
The funds must be provided. That is why
We're gathered here, so happy, you and I.
We want to send—to aid the next advance—
A constant flow of melody to France.

That afternoon was the last time I saw Ellen Terry until 1922, when she and I were among those chosen by the Lord Rector of the University of St. Andrews—Sir J. M. Barrie, O.M.—to be awarded the degree of honorary LL.D. Sir James put Miss Terry, whose blindness had increased, into my charge. In her robes she looked as though her Portia—become venerable, but still lovely, and still with some of the old delicious mischief—had returned to earth. Throughout the proceedings—and this was a day of formalities and processions—she affected to be nervous; but

I think she enjoyed it, although it was all something of a mystery to her. Her remarks were full of the old gay inconsequence. Earl Haig, as Chancellor of the University, presided over the ceremony, and handed us our caps. As this sweet actress and most gracious Doctor of Laws knelt before him, I wondered if he knew about that matinée and her share in it.

I am minded to add to this reminiscence of Miss Terry some lines which I wrote on her great colleague Sir Henry Irving, when, in 1918, a bust of him by Mr. Albert Toft was sold for an actors' charity. They are based on many visits to the Lyceum pit in my early London days and on the reminiscent conversation of such of Irving's friends and associates as Sir Arthur Pinero, Mr. Arthur Collins and Mr. Seymour Hicks.

This was the Master of our latter day,
Destined, in any sphere, to hold a sway;
Supreme within his Art, and everywhere
A creature breathing the Olympian air.

I never met him, save as millions might,
With footlights intervening, night on night;
But 'tis the Actor's privilege to speak
To each of us as to a friend unique:
To them routine; but oh to us how dear!
And Irving's intimacies still I hear—
I the one person (so he made each feel)
Worthy in that vast house to test his steel.

Oh for the old Lyceum's gracious ways—
The rich and stately movement of those plays,
Their mellow harmonies for ear and eye,
Their triumphs of serene urbanity!
No parsimony there! On all he wrought
He spent the maximum of care, of thought,
Giving his best by habit and with zest,
Having in point of fact no second best.
Of all offences, meanness first he branded,
So spread his generous gold-leaf double-handed,
Lavish not only on his sumptuous Art,
But, privately, to ease how many a heart:
Arithmetic herself could scarce compose
The sum of Irving's kindness 'neath the rose.

But hush! the curtain rises. There he stands:
That noble face again, those slim white hands.
No matter who might be in box or stall,
This was the dominator of them all:
Touching whatever part he'd represent
With something finer than the author meant:
A something rare, and spacious, and his own,
Which, influencing all within his zone,
From floor to ceiling radiating through,
Compelled the audience to be finer too.

NOTE

The essays and stories that comprise this volume are reprinted, with changes and additions, from the columns of *Punch* and the *Sunday Times*, by kind permission of the controllers of those papers. The 'Memory of Ellen Terry' is new.

I wish to express here my thanks to Dame Laura Knight, A.R.A., for allowing me to use the frontispiece.

E. V. L.

Easter, 1929

Printed in Great Britain by
Butler & Tanner Ltd.,
Frome and London

Date Due

CAT. NO. 23 233 PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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